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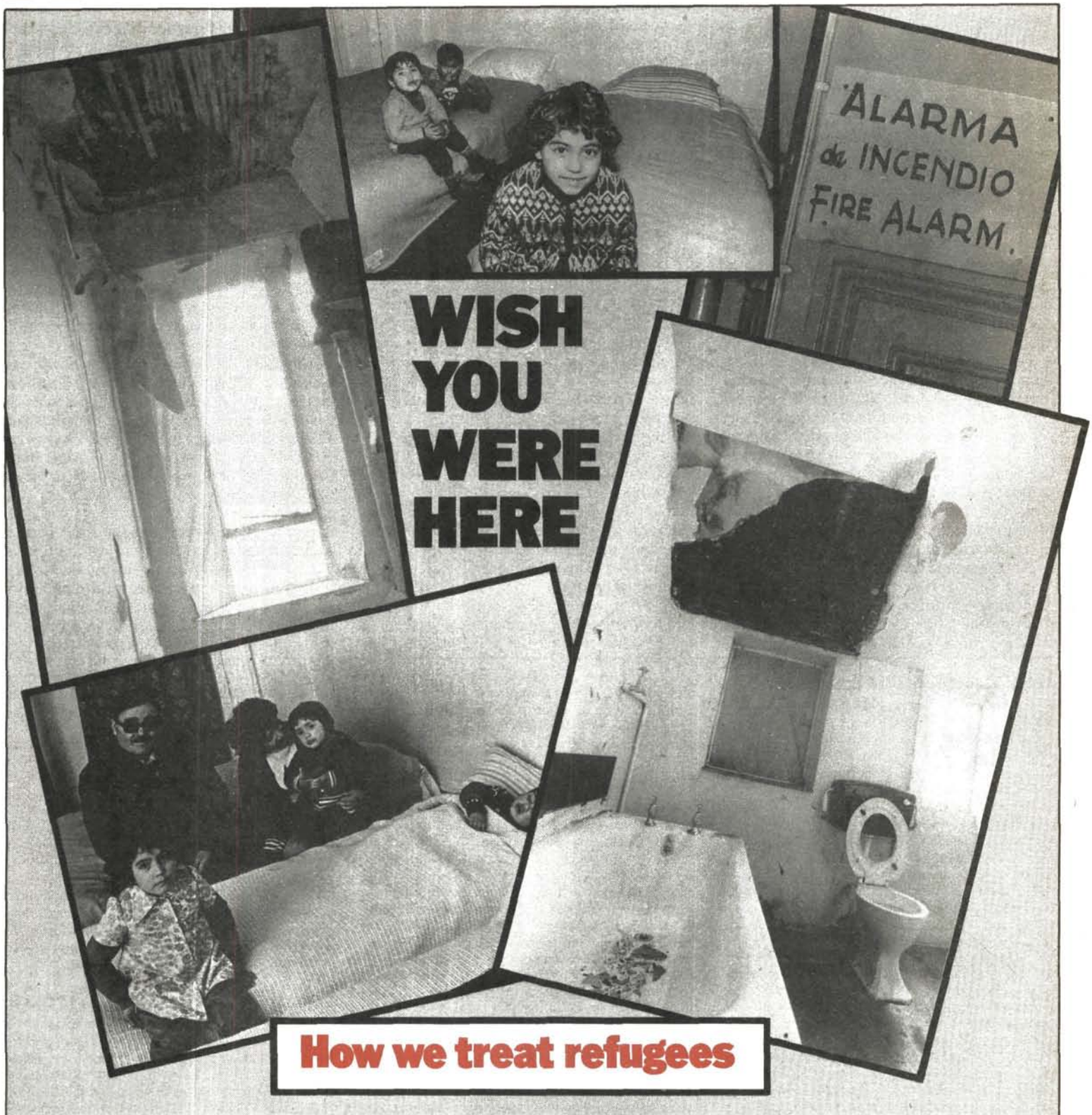

How we treat refugees

Capitalist Tales: the death of a city

The Daily Mail strikes again

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Essays: Kermode on Conquest/Thwaite on Clive James

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Solomon Binding II

Patrick Wintour writes: The 'concordat' between the TUC and the Government, to be sealed next Wednesday and perhaps incorporated into a White Paper, scarcely seems likely to stop the electoral haemorrhage. On Tuesday the MORI poll in the *Daily Express* showed a large swing away from Labour: the detailed results on Wednesday showed that Mrs Thatcher has accurately selected the anti-union issues to exploit. Fifty-one per cent of those polled said that unions and industrial disputes were the most important issues – 20 per cent more than those who said prices were most important. Crucially, the poll shows that Labour has lost its election-winning issue: its ability to get on with the unions. Unemployment, another formerly strong Labour card, has now been buried as an important issue by the preoccupation with the union question.

The poll also shows that trade unionists themselves want to see union power tempered. Eighty-five per cent of trade unionists want a ban on secondary picketing, 76 per cent want a limit on the number of pickets and 91 per cent want postal ballots before strikes (a change, incidentally, which is just as likely to increase as to reduce the number of strikes). The best Labour hope must be that memories are short and that a more peaceful industrial climate prevails at election time.

For the moment attention is being concentrated on the concordat, the 36-paragraph joint statement of the TUC and Government discussed at Downing Street this week. The draft is nowhere near as ambitious as the 1973 Social Contract, even when seen in conjunction with the up-dated Social Contract, *Into the Eighties*. It is not a coherent policy to extricate Britain from its economic hole and is addressed almost exclusively to short-term problems. Its real intention is to steal Mrs Thatcher's clothes.

To tackle industrial relations problems the TUC will introduce three codes of behaviour or 'guides', dealing with negotiating and disputes procedures, the conduct of industrial disputes, trade union organisation and closed shops. The first guide stresses the need for conciliation and for the unions to take urgent steps in the case of unofficial action to press for a return to work. No strike is to occur over an inter-union dispute until the TUC have adjudicated. Their decision is to be binding.

On the conduct of industrial disputes the TUC recommends that union rules should provide for strike ballots to be held but that this is to be at the discretion of the individual union. Secondary picketing (already virtually illegal) is to be discouraged. Official pickets are to be identified and to follow the instructions of those in charge of the picket. Provision is made under the terms of the guide for union members to cross picket lines without fear of discipline by their union. The third guide on the closed shop (not an immediate issue but one which the Tories wish to exploit) suggests that conscientious objectors, existing employees and those with long service need not join a union. The concordat says the emphasis should be on persuading workers of the benefits of trade union membership but there will be no law to stop unionists from refusing to work with non-unionists.

On pay the draft says that though there is no mathematical relationship between prices being brought down to 5 per cent, growth of 3 per cent and a particular settlement level, a rise in the level of pay much above these figures would be incompatible with achieving them. The Government's aim is to have inflation below 5 per cent within three years. The draft, as expected, says there should be an annual national forum on pay but it rejects synchronisation of pay settlements.

On the dilemma of the public sector, the draft says that no group of workers should be deprived of the right to strike in the last resort, but that the TUC's Public Services committee should in the next month look at ways in which certain groups of workers should be given guaranteed wages that should make it unnecessary for them to strike.

The deft concluding paragraphs aim to accommodate all views on pay determination, but leave the reader only slightly clearer on what is intended. Collective bargaining is stated to be the best flexible means of solving relativities' problems yet at the same time there is to be a representative body to assess the criteria and justification for significant changes in relativities, even though the draft says that it would be unhelpful to have a league table approach to the distribution of income. The document hardly provides a visionary picture of Britain's industrial future nor, apart from one vacuous paragraph, does it address itself to the real short term problem of the current and mounting pay claims.

Right on with Labour

Christopher Price writes: If Labour's Annual Conference in October is the power base of the Left, its Local Government Conference in the winter provides a haven within which the Right can fight back. Its plenary sessions and working groups provide a useful annual opportunity for Labour councillors to swap problems and question Ministers. It is the trappings which exude an atmosphere of anti-Left factionalism, and last weekend at Newcastle mounting industrial unrest simply reinforced the determination of these militant 'moderates'.

On Saturday, the moderates carefully stage-managed a standing ovation for the Prime Minister (which did not quite come off) and in the evening they all repaired to a packed meeting of the 'Campaign for Labour Victory' at which Ministers (Bill Rodgers and David Ennals) and their aspirant acolytes explained how the Left was about to lose the election, and that it was all because an undemocratic derelict Labour Party put them in power in the National Executive. The Party should concentrate less on policies (especially 'unrealistic' ones like compulsory planning agreements) and more on gaining new members. Bill Rodgers concluded by saying that he intended to fight and fight and fight again for the Party which he loved; confirming that, once the election is over, Labour is in for another orgy of traditional bloodletting. With their glossy pamphlets and well-heeled organisers, CLV seems set fair to become the reincarnate clone of the old Campaign for Democratic Socialism of the early 1960s. Indeed, they admitted that, in spite of their title, they had really timed their campaign to come *after* a (presumably lost) election.

In 1960, Tony Crossland's pamphlet *Must Labour Lose?* predicted decades of opposition unless the Left was tamed, yet Labour was back within a few years, once they had a prime minister who united the two factions in the Party. After the meeting, lingering impressions remained: that the militant moderates have no better idea than Mrs Thatcher of how to run Britain without the unions; and that there is now a significant group within the Right, as well as within the Left of the Labour Party, with a vested interest in defeat, eager for the subsequent dog fight.

Rotten boroughs

Clare Lovell writes: Last week the Tory-controlled South Glamorgan County Council resolved to spend £3,000 on a campaign to persuade its ratepayers to vote 'no' in the Welsh Assembly referendum on 1 March. Tempers were short in the council chamber as the Labour minority sought to refer back the proposal as being of 'dubious legality without any moral justification', and 30 angry demonstrators were removed from the public gallery when they protested at the use of ratepayers' money for political ends. One local resident could face court proceedings for refusing to pay his rates in protest against the decision and several Welsh Nationalists have indicated they will follow this example. Michael Foot last week called the decision 'a peculiar way of using ratepayers' money' but refused to allow time for a Commons debate on the subject. John Morris, Secretary of State for Wales, has also expressed doubts about the rectitude of the council's action, and organisers of the 'yes' campaign are keen to test the decision in court but at present lack the funds to do so.

It is not difficult to understand why Tory councils should wish to see the Welsh Assembly proposals come to nothing (Gwent has set aside £1,000 for a campaign similar to South Glamorgan's). The Welsh electorate would undoubtedly return a significant majority of Labour members to such a body. Moreover councillors in South Glamorgan are concerned that they will be shuffled out of office by a Welsh Assembly whose priority is local government reorganisation. At present South Glamorgan is over-represented, with City, District and County Councillors numbering 200 for a population of 400,000. Any reorganisation proposed by an assembly is likely to consider merging district and County Councils and creating a new Greater Cardiff City Council — which would mean less Conservative power.

Nalgo too has joined the 'vote no' side. Its annual conference decided last year to oppose the Welsh Assembly because any jobs it created would be filled by civil servants rather than local government officers. The conference set aside £5,000 for a campaign of information, but they have yet to decide exactly how the money will be spent. In Scotland, however, Nalgo is giving verbal support to the 'yes' lobby.

Gwynedd County Council however, who strongly support the establishment of a Welsh Assembly have decided not to give financial support from the rates to the campaign. They felt that such expenditure would create a dangerous precedent.

Trudeau's Flying Circus

Charlotte Gray writes from Ottawa: Premiers of the 10 Canadian provinces are currently meeting Prime Minister Trudeau in Ottawa to discuss ways to stop the Canadian Confederation coming apart at the seams. Federalists among them have a new bagful of ideas: the recommendations of a recently issued report from the Task Force on Canadian Unity.

The Task Force was created by Trudeau in 1977 as a roving commission to help define a vision of a united Canada after the election of Rene Levesque's separatist government in Quebec in 1976.

Nicknamed the Pepin-Robarts Flying Circus after its co-chairmen, the group of eight prominent politicians, academics, journalists and one labour leader canvassed views throughout the country. The commission had planned to release its report in March, but fearing an election announcement would steal its thunder, rushed loudly into print at the end of January.

The report does not mince words about the gravity of the constitutional crisis Canada is facing – which the commission feels Canadians are ignoring

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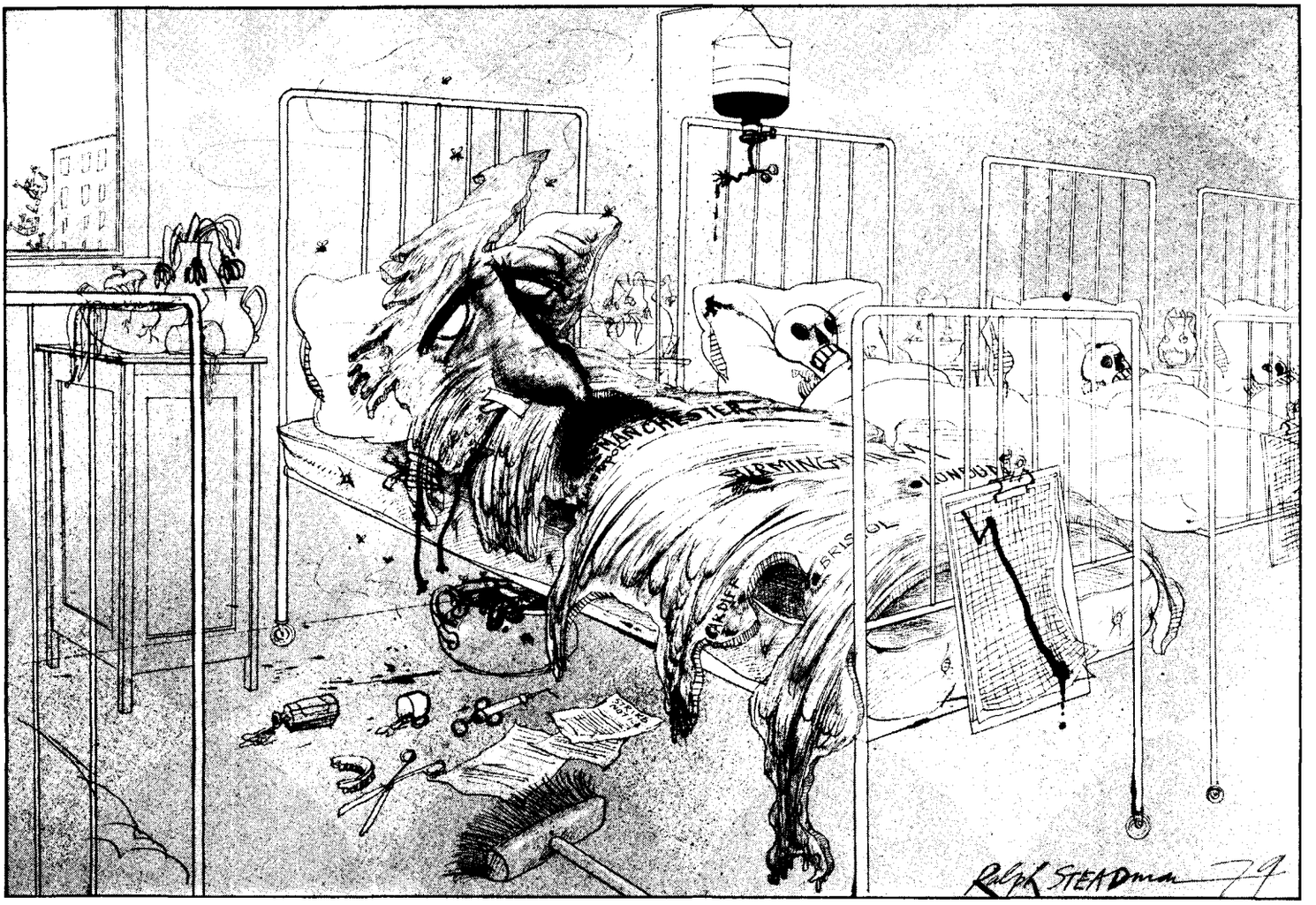

NOTES

at their peril: 'Canada is passing through a period of travail which is more than a crisis of development; it is a crisis of existence itself'. Without swift action to overhaul the federal system in order to reflect more accurately the regional diversity of Canada, the commission felt that the federation might fall apart.

Public reaction has focused on what the report recommends for Quebec. English Canada finds suggestions that Quebec should enjoy 'special status', because of its unique French heritage, unacceptable; all the provinces, especially wealthy ones like Alberta, want a share of any autonomy bonuses. The Task Force neatly sidestepped this debate by recommending that *all* the provinces should have access to extra legislative powers in the cultural fields, and those which didn't want them could delegate them to the central government. But it also argues that 'Quebec is distinctive and should . . . have the powers necessary to protect and develop its distinctive character. Any political solution short of this would lead to the rupture of Canada'. Chairman Jean-Luc Pepin urged English Canadians to find ways of convincing Quebecers that the federal system can accommodate their aspirations.

The report also recommended scrapping the Senate in favour of a provincially-appointed Council, restructuring the Supreme Court of Canada, and a new distribution of powers between federal and provincial governments.

The most innovatory recommendation is for 60 new members of the House of Commons to be elected by some form of proportional representation. The Task Force says that this would help overcome the dangerous regional polarisation of federal political parties and eliminate the situation that allows a party to receive 20 percent of the popular vote in a province without electing any MPs from there. This proposal is a modification of the electoral system at present used in West Germany.

Despite the political hype surrounding the unveiling of the Flying Circus and its report, it is not clear how much attention the government will pay to its recommendations. Trudeau welcomed the report as a 'landmark contribution' to the unity debate, but he is known to have reservations about some of its proposals. He has always wanted constitutional guarantees for minority language rights, and the Task Force specifically rejected this. And he is wary of the Task Force's treatment of Quebec which he feels still smacks of 'special status'. But the report does direct attention once again at the whole Candian constitutional debate, on which Trudeau would like to fight this year's election.

Visiting Judgment

Francis Wheen writes: The effects of Lord Hailsham's visitatorial judgment at Brunel University last year (NS 3 November 1978) have become apparent with Brunel's decision not to proceed with a court application to evict two married students who had overstayed their one year tenancy. The case was due to be heard at Uxbridge County Court last week, but the university's bursar wrote to the students concerned to tell them of the withdrawal; 'This decision has been taken . . . as a result of recent decisions taken at civil courts on matters of a similar nature. The judgment of the visitor on a recent issue has also influenced the university's decision. The matter will now be treated internally.'

Brunel have thus recognised that the scope of the university visitor's jurisdiction is much wider than was hitherto believed. In 1692 Sir John Holt declared that the office of a visitor was 'to judge according to the statutes of the college, and to expel and deprive upon just occasions, and to hear appeals of courts.' However, for many years afterwards it was thought that the visitor's exclusive jurisdiction ('his determinations are final, and examinable in no other court whatsoever', said Holt) applied only to *academic* disputes over failed exams and suchlike; several recent decisions have now made it clear that *anything* relating to the internal arrangements of a university is within the visitor's sole jurisdiction. As Lord Hailsham said at Brunel last year, in a case which involved a student whose degree had been withheld because of unpaid rent: 'I do not believe that on a true construction of the Charter the provision of student accommodation can be divorced from the academic activities of the university. In present-day conditions, in order to achieve the one it is necessary to undertake the other.'

Brunel's decision this week will be welcome news to the married couple who will not now be evicted until an internal tribunal has discussed the matter, but it does raise certain fundamental questions about the right of access to the courts. In *Patel v. University of Bradford* last year Sir Robert Megarry confirmed the visitor's sole and exclusive powers: 'The courts have no jurisdiction over matters within the visitor's judicial approval.' As the number of matters within the visitor's judicial approval grows, calls must surely come soon for a review of this antiquated system of private justice.

Oil Strike

Brian Wilson writes: A strike of over 6,000 North Sea oil platform construction workers has quietly entered its second month. The men, faced with an intransigent employers' association, agreed last weekend to escalate their action and attempt to stop the flow of oil ashore. Support is being sought at the Sullom Voe and Flotta oil terminals, and from union members working for companies which supply the North Sea.

Fifteen oil production platforms are involved in the dispute, which is primarily concerned with conditions and uniform trade union recognition, rather than with pay. The employers are some of Britain's biggest construction firms, formed into the Oil and Chemical Platform Construction Association. Most

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of the men are skilled tradesmen who work on the 'hook-up' which brings the platforms into production after installation in the North Sea. Frontier attitudes also prevail in industrial relations. This is tacitly recognised by the Government, since the Employment Protection Act and Health and Safety Acts do not extend to offshore structures.

The strikers are concentrating on key points among their 23 demands — a two-week on, two-off rota, instead of two to one at present; an improved basic wage structure; overtime payments for hours in excess of 84 per week; rest facilities before resuming work when weather conditions prevent them reaching sleeping accommodation at the end of a shift; stand-down payments when they are not required on platforms immediately after leave.

The men claim that the North Sea's big-money image is superficial, and that few would be there if there was work elsewhere. Skilled men earn £3.66 per hour flat-rate for at least 84 hours per week, without the option of refusing extra hours. But on weeks-off they get only £1.44 per hour for 40 hours. Then there may be several weeks of unpaid layoff before recall. 'Basically,' said one electrician, 'We want the same conditions as we would have onshore. At present it's diabolical out there. The money isn't as good as people think, and, anyway, money's no good without the conditions.'

President Carter and the corporations

Claudia Wright writes from Washington: As attacks on President Carter's 1980 budget pick up momentum, the release of his economic report has been hardly noticed. While the budget papers and the State of the Union address make a political manifesto for Carter's 1980 reelection campaign, the report is an economic analysis from the technical side of the White House. It shows, with embarrassing clarity, why the political strategy and the budget can't possibly work as intended.

On the budget's main point Carter's political and economic advisers appear to agree – reducing inflation is the Administration's principal objective: cutting Government spending is the method. The forecast for 1980 is an inflation rate below 6½ per cent, so the new budget must cut at least two and perhaps more than three percentage points off the prevailing rate (through 1978 this was 9 per cent). The economic advisers don't appear to think that the budget strategy can do this at all.

The economic advisers don't appear to think that saying that the major cause of inflation is poor productivity – workers' wages rising faster than their rate of output. Deficit spending by the Federal government isn't blamed at all, and elsewhere in the report the productivity explanation is dropped also. Instead, 1978 price rises are attributed to two sectors of the economy where productivity gains have long been held out as an example to the rest of the economy – farming and home construction. A close reading of the spending estimates belies this. Price supports to guarantee farmers' income, continue at over $3 billion, despite cuts. Moreover, the Council of Economic Advisers, told Carter that neither wage increases nor unemployment benefits had caused the fiscal problems of 1978.

The message from the economists can hardly have been welcome to Carter: despite falling real income and signs of impending recession, American wage-earners kept the bubble of economic demand inflated enough to maintain most of their jobs and stimulate moderate GDP growth. The corporations, on the other hand, made real income gains in 1978, lifting profits by an average ten per cent, without noticeably accelerating the utilisation of existing plant capacity or the creation of new productive investment. In other words, the corporate sector on whom the President is pinning his hope for 2½ per cent GNP growth and relatively stable employment (not to mention his reelection chances) is more than happy to let the economy slide into recession. That would destroy the President's plan to cut the deficit.

PROPAGANDA
Christopher Hitchens

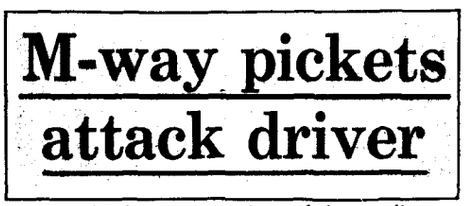
From the man who 'found' Bormann and 'exposed' Leyland

Ghost writing at the Daily Mail

WE SEEM to have drawn a little blood from the *Daily Mail* with our analysis last week of its 'violent pickets' story. Last Tuesday, the leader-page was given over almost entirely to an abusive attack on the NS – an attack, however, which was stronger on rhetoric than on factual discussion.

To return to the beginning. On 18 January, the *Daily Mail* ran a major article on its front page, decorated with emphatic headlines (see illustration). 'A lorry driver was hauled from his cab and beaten up with wooden clubs yesterday by four mobile motorway pickets who had followed him for 100 miles. As they shouted 'Scab bastard', he fought them off with an iron bar . . .' Not much room for doubt in that presentation. Last week, we suggested – after having checked with the driver – that when the *Mail* published that story it had no evidence to justify such a treatment. It still doesn't. When listing our criticisms, the *Mail* seems to admit point six – 'there is nothing to identify the men as pickets' – to be the heart of the matter. They respond: '*This is accurate as far as it goes*' (our italics). Well, what then becomes of the headline?

This coy admission comes some way down the fourth column of the *Mail*'s attack on the NS . But their whole effort is rather like that. For instance, Mr Field (the victim of the attack) is quoted as saying that 'the *Daily Mail* story was as correct as any story was'. He told us that he wasn't surprised by the incorrect reporting of his remarks, but took it to be par for the course in pop newspapers – which is a slightly different way of saying the same thing. And we did point out that other papers had written the story in much the same way as the *Mail*, though with far less prominence. Again, the original *Mail* story said Field was 'hauled from his cab'. Mr Field told us he was *not* hauled from his cab. The *Mail*, defending itself, says: 'Mr Field now accepts that this' (ie that he was hauled from the cab) 'was not the case.' What about the *Daily Mail* accepting that it wasn't the case?


M-way pickets attack driver

We said that the words 'scab bastard' were never uttered. The *Mail* now concedes this, while claiming that some similar form of words was used. Why were they so sure of this inflammatory statement in the first place?

Was Mr Field followed for 100 miles by the 'pickets'? We said there was no evidence to suggest it. The *Mail* now says a policeman thinks it happened. But neither he nor they can say why (the policeman wasn't on the scene), and Field has no reason to think he was followed. In any case, the same policeman has told me that a van similar to the one used by Field's attackers had been reported on another occasion near Birmingham – not the right end of the motorway, as Field's run that day began at the London end. The *Mail*'s handling of the police evidence is not impressive. They quote a Detective-Inspector Cook as saying:

> I could tell they (the NS) were trying to draw me into something political. Hitchens seemed to be suggesting the attack on Mr Field had something to do with the employers – that it was a put-up job and was really fictitious.

I *didn't* speak to Inspector Cook, but it doesn't seem unreasonable for the NS to ask about possible motivations for the attack (we didn't pass on the suggestion to our readers, because we saw no evidence for it). Inspector Cook now tells the *Mail* that he did not mention any 'leads', which rather supports the idea that the police don't have any proof connecting the attack with strikers. (In passing, I did contact the relevant *Mail* people while writing my story. They didn't question me before writing theirs.)

To cover the numerous other discrepancies in their report, the *Mail* say:

> Where minor inconsistencies occur they are of a kind which will always show up in a case such as this where untrained observers seek accurately and honestly to remember events they witnessed.

Just so. Perhaps that could be circulated to *Mail* staff against the next time they rush into print with allegations of criminal conduct on the part of strikers.

The oddest thing about the *Mail*'s attack on the NEW STATESMAN – much of which is simple character-assassination – is that it is signed by one 'Peter Greig'. 'Greig' delivers himself of a good many judgments about professional journalistic competence.

There is, however, no such person. Generally, 'Peter Greig' is a house by-line to cover the identity of Stewart Steven, associate editor of the *Daily Mail*. It would hardly do, perhaps, for him to talk about questions of evidence and verification under his own name. He is known even beyond Fleet Street as the man who expensively 'discovered' for the *Daily Express* that a perfectly inoffensive Latin American was 'in fact' the Nazi leader Martin Bormann. One of his major personal achievements at the *Daily Mail* was the great Leyland bribes fiasco, in which Mr Steven and his colleagues leapt into print on the basis of a pack of forged documents. Less notoriously, in 1974 Mr Steven published (under his own name) a ridiculous book called *Operation Splinter Factor* which, on the basis of 'evidence' remaining largely uncited, claimed to show that the CIA had arranged the famous show trials in Eastern Europe during the forties. It is a record of credulity few could match, so we are at least able to extend to Mr Steven the courtesy of saying that he probably does believe what he writes.

Briefly, the *Daily Mail* has published an article many times the length of the original, and still cannot produce any worthwhile evidence to justify their initial inflammatory treatment of the incident.

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POLITICS
Francis Wheen

The continuing scandal of Britain's broken promises

Refugees left in the cold

BRITAIN HAS GAINED something of a reputation for breaking international agreements, but seldom can it have set about thwarting them so openly and systematically as it has with refugees: *verba, non res* seems to have been the motto in Whitehall since the UK signed the 1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees. The legal procedures which Britain uses to prevent refugees being recognised are sometimes complicated, but they are worth following for they reveal that Perfidious Albion is up to her old tricks.

Article 3 of the 1951 Convention declares that 'the contracting States shall apply the provisions of this Convention to refugees without discrimination as to race, religion or country of origin.' Britain contravenes this by refusing to recognise the possibility of Commonwealth citizens becoming refugees: thus Ugandans, Zimbabweans or Singaporeans clearly within the Convention definition of a refugee – one who has a 'well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion' – are admitted to Britain only as 'students', 'visitors' or one of the other exceptions allowed under the Immigration Rules, and are thus denied the protection to which refugees are entitled. The use of such categories to cover genuine refugees causes enormous administrative confusion and can jeopardise the Commonwealth refugee's chances of being allowed in at all. The Immigration Rules state, for example, that 'an applicant is to be refused an entry clearance as a student if the [immigration] officer is not satisfied that the applicant is able, and intends, to follow a full-time course of study *and to leave the country on completion of it.*' (My italics.) A student refugee from, say, Uganda is clearly in no position to give such a guarantee, and is thus, technically speaking, ineligible for entry. Perhaps the greatest incongruity in the present system is that the Immigration Rules for Commonwealth citizens actually include a sentence on refugees even though the British government maintains that there is no such creature as a Commonwealth refugee.

The confusion stems from the fact that the brief statements on refugees in the Immigration Rules were inserted – after prompting by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) – only when the Rules were in their final draft, with the result that the refugee rules appear as a category of 'last resort' rather than a principle of accepted practice: 'A passenger who *does not otherwise qualify for admission* (my italics) should not be refused leave to enter if the only country to which he can be removed is one to which he is unwilling to go owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted . . .' So if the authorities can call a refugee a 'student', or some other euphemism, they will do so, thus denying his rights under the 1951 Convention. Only refugees on government programmes ('boat-people', for example) stand a reasonable chance of being granted their proper status.

The most fundamental guarantee provided by the UN Convention is security from expulsion or forcible repatriation (unless the refugee has been convicted of a 'particularly serious crime' and constitutes a 'danger to the community'). Moreover refugees can be expelled only 'in pursuance of a decision reached in accordance with due process of law' which means that they must have had a chance to appeal against it. Refugees here who are not recognised by the government (as most aren't) receive no such protection: their leave to remain (usually given for 12 months) may simply not be renewed, or they may be deported for breaking the conditions under which they were admitted – for instance by working without a permit. Furthermore, if the Home Secretary decides that deportation would be 'conducive to the public good' or in the interests of 'relations between the United Kingdom and any other country or for other reasons of a political nature' (as the Immigration Rules so charmingly put it), the refugee has no right of appeal at all.

Officially recognised refugees are also entitled to a 'Convention travel document', the universally-accepted refugee passport which guarantees the right to re-enter the country at any time, as well as enabling the refugee to travel without a visa to most other European countries. Refugees who are accepted into Britain in some other capacity receive only a Certificate of Identity – normally valid for just one trip – which is regarded with suspicion by many border officers and which allows the refugee to travel nowhere without a visa.

The British government's determination to allow refugee status to as few people as possible is also reflected in the system of appeals against refusal of asylum. In 1977 the British representative of the UNHCR compiled a survey of refugee appeals between January 1974 and April 1977: not one case had been successful. The Standing Conference on Refugees – an umbrella organisation for British agencies working with refugees – noted that 'in immigration appeals in general there was a success rate of between 10 and 15 per cent. While this may be seen as fairly low, it makes a startling comparison with the 0 per cent for refugee appeals.'

The Home Office sees this low success rate as a tribute to the skill of its immigration officers in whittling out the genuine refugee cases, but no-one else – least of all the UNHCR – takes this view seriously. The root of the problem lies in the lack of any clear distinction between an immigrant and a refugee, despite the manifest differences in their respective positions: refugees have not, after all, arrived here of their own free will; nor are they free to return to their country of origin if they are refused admission. Nevertheless when asylum-seekers arrive at the port of entry they are dealt with by the immigration service, who have wide discretionary powers as to whom they allow into Britain, and who do not give the applicant any information about possible assistance from a voluntary agency until after a refusal of permission to enter – and even then only if the applicant has the right to appeal. Since appeals are only possible if the refugee is on British soil and consequently under the jurisdiction of the Immigration Act, right of appeal is effectively denied to anyone who applies from abroad for an entry clearance certificate and is turned down, or anyone who is sent straight back on arrival in Britain.

The dangers of determining both immigrant status and refugee status by the same process are also shown by the methods used to investigate claims for asylum made after entry. The applicant will be interviewed by a fairly junior official from the Home Office's Lunar House or a local police station, who will usually have little knowledge about refugees or the political conditions which produce them. Interpreters are seldom used, and the applicant is not shown the final interview report, yet the information obtained at the interview will be used by other officials to make a decision on the case without having seen the applicant themselves. There will often be a delay of six months (in some cases as long as a year) before the decision is made, during which time the refugee will have no status and no rights here.

Increasing dissatisfaction with the UK gov-

No place like home

In a fortnight's time the Joint Working Group for Refugees from Chile will itself need a refuge, when it is evicted from its reception centre in London's Pembridge Square, near Notting Hill, for overstaying the lease. The GLC has offered a site in Bayswater, but several months of structural repairs will be required before the building is fit for use: so, for the time being, the centre's refugees will have to live in hotels and bed-and-breakfasts.

The British government decided to admit Chilean refugees in 1974 and the Joint Working Group (JWG) – financed by the Home Office – was entrusted with the task of organising their resettlement. For the first three years of its existence, however, the JWG was funded on a six-monthly basis and was thus unable to plan ahead or sign leases for periods of more than half a year, with the result that a small fortune was spent in hotel bills and rent. The Home Office's tight budgeting also forced the JWG to accept unspeakably squalid conditions for the refugees in its care: the Pembridge Square centre is riddled with damp, which has caused several ceilings to cave in (see cover), and has so many hazards that a fire officer threw up his hands in horror when he inspected the building. The Chilean family of five (shown in the picture) live in one room: the father has chronic bronchitis, continually aggravated by the damp, and the youngest son who contracted double pneumonia, has now been told by doctors that he must not return to the centre. So next time you hear a government minister congratulating himself on how much we've done for Chilean refugees, remember Pembridge Square: it is emblematic of British behaviour towards refugees, another sad chapter in a long history of neglect and bureaucratic harassment.

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ernment's behaviour towards refugees caused the UNHCR's British representative, Jean Heidler, to submit a note to the Home Office last April, outlining the shortcomings of the present system and making suggestions for change. The Home Office promised a reply before Christmas but, true to form, have yet to produce anything (although it is now believed to be imminent). One can understand the Home Office's dilatoriness: Heidler's proposals would ensure fairer treatment for refugees but would, in the process, reduce the Home Office's power in this area. The man responsible for drafting the Home Office's reply is Mr Roy McDowall who was, significantly, an immigration officer for 19 years and is now a Principal in the Control After Entry Division of the HO's Immigration and Nationality Department. Since Mr McDowall's full responsibilities cover 'political security, gaming cases, Russian visitors, mainland and Taiwan Chinese, refugees and stateless persons' it might be thought that he is too busy keeping an eye on Aeroflot package tours to apply himself seriously to the task of formulating a coherent policy on refugees. It might also occur to some that he is a relatively junior official to be taking such important policy decisions.

When the Home Office does find the energy to make its long-awaited statement, it is fairly certain that Mr McDowall will have successfully fought off any claims on his empire. Both the UNHCR and the Standing Conference on Refugees would like to see a distinction made between the determination of refugee status and the decision on whether to grant asylum. In Germany refugee status is decided by an autonomous body whose judgments are subject to the control of the courts. France too has an independent Office, and appeals against its decisions are heard by an independent Commission consisting of a UNHCR representative, a member of the Council of the Office and a member of the *Conseil d'Etat*. Decisions on asylum remain with local police authorities and the Ministry of the Interior, but the point of having a separate procedure for determining status is that it shifts the burden of proof, since once refugees have been recognised as such the Ministry of the Interior has to show, if it wishes to refuse asylum, why the refugees should *not* be admitted under the Convention.

Britain – unlike France, Germany, Italy, Austria, Belgium, Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Switzerland – has not incorporated the terms of the 1951 Convention (and its amending Protocol of 1967) into domestic law. This omission is made in spite of the fact that UN Resolution 428(V) calls upon governments to cooperate with the UNHCR 'especially by becoming parties to international conventions providing for the protection of refugees, *and taking the necessary steps of implementation* under such conventions' (italics added). Although Jean Heidler's submission to the Home Secretary declared that 'to UNHCR's knowledge there is no case in which the Convention has been fully implemented in a country where its main provisions are not part of domestic law', there is no chance that the Home Office will agree to the reduction of its discretionary powers which would be caused by such an enactment.

The only sop which the Home Office may provide is an end to the nonsense of refusing to recognise Commonwealth refugees for what they are. Apart from that, Britain will continue to rat on its international obligations and will do its utmost to prevent refugees receiving the protection which is theirs by right.

The voluntary agencies which deal with refugees will continue to be hampered by the Home Office's grudging attitude, and the greatest sufferers will be the refugees themselves, who have enough hurdles to cross – learning a new language, recovering from torture or malnutrition, adapting to new climates and customs, obtaining equivalent qualifications for employment, finding a home – without the added hindrances provided by the host government. Which is a pity. As the World University Service pointed out in a booklet last year, refugees bring more than a bundle of belongings when they arrive in a new country. It's worth remembering that Einstein was a refugee.

INDIA
Mervyn Jones

Hindus and Moslems slaughter each other, amid plentiful harvests

Janata and the Joker in the pack

WITH CONSIDERABLE ELOQUENCE, my host in the old house in Alipur Road maintains that India is coming face to face with its real nature after three decades of self-comforting illusions. He also maintains that he doesn't read the newspapers and has lost interest in politics: an assertion not to be misinterpreted since – like all intelligent people in Delhi and indeed in India – he is intensely concerned about the country's future. He means that he doesn't care whether the latest round of negotiations has papered over the cracks in Janata, or for that matter in Congress. Reality lies elsewhere, and his central thesis certainly rings true.

In the Nehru era, it was supposed that all antagonisms of religions, caste, region and language had been liquidated along with the British power that fostered them. Untouchability, for instance, had ceased to exist because it was outlawed in the new constitution. Under the banner of 'democracy, secularism and socialism' – aspirations easily depicted as accomplished achievements – India stood revealed as a modern nation-state, susceptible to guidance by uniform institutions and centralised planning. But now one has to see that things are happening which, on these assumptions, ought to be impossible. A case in point: inconveniently for idealists, about 100 people in the town of Aligarh were recently slaughtered to the sound of war-cries of religious fanaticism – Moslems by Hindus and then, in a retaliatory second round, Hindus by Moslems.

Aligarh, 80 miles from Delhi, is an industrial town consisting mainly of tiny artisan workshops in a warren of narrow streets. Incredibly, it has a population of 350,000 – incredibly because its area isn't greater than that of an English country town like Chichester. You don't have to be a disciple of Robert Ardrey to concede that such dense human contiguity makes compression-chambers for tension. Moslems are the minority community, about 30 per cent of the population. Outside the town, making a contrast with its wide roads and modern buildings, is the university, one of India's best. Its title is Aligarh Moslem University and it was founded to provide a balance to Hindu predominance in higher education. Moslems are the poorer element hereabouts and form only slightly more than half of the student body, but they do get preferential entry. As a national institution, the university gets bigger grants than the locally-financed colleges. In an atmosphere of desperate competition for the qualifications on which good jobs depend, this is a grievance among Hindus.

Aligarh home destroyed by hand grenade

Things hotted up last autumn after a wrestling match in which the Moslem contestant was (Moslems say) a clear winner, but the referee awarded a draw and saved the face of the Hindu champion, Bhura Pahalwan. Later, this man was waylaid and fatally stabbed. Before he died, he identified his assailants as Moslems. Some say: 'he would, wouldn't he?', for he was closely linked with militant Hindu gangs. Infuriated members of these gangs seized his body from the hospital and paraded it provocatively through the Moslem district of Manik Chowk. On the night of 5 October 1978, Manik Chowk was attacked. When I walked round it, months later, it still looked as if it had endured a 1940-style incendiary raid. Many houses had been set on fire with kerosene-soaked balls of cloth; I peered into one where an old woman had burned to death. A new technique (Aligarh has had five such outbreaks since 1950) was the use of hand-grenades, perhaps secretly manufactured or perhaps stolen from an Army depot. In these tiny houses with their flimsy walls and ceilings, a hand-grenade can wreak the same total destruction as a bomb in a western building. People who tried to escape were coshed or knifed; one Moslem fruit-vendor showed me a scar running the length of his stomach. It seems that the police gave free rein to this pogrom for six hours.

The choice of target isn't without an economic explanation. Manik Chowk is a Moslem enclave surrounded by larger houses belonging to Hindu merchants and moneylenders, whose known desire is to get the area emptied so that they can demolish it and engage in some advantageous redevelopment. One figure in the Hindu business world is K. K. Navman, who is also prominent in the RSS (Rashtriya Sevak Sangh, a league of Hindu chauvinists) and had risen to be president of the Janata party organisation in Aligarh. Seen by many people to be directing the pogrom,

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Navman was arrested but released through his political contacts. When things got out of hand, a curfew was imposed, but it was prematurely lifted. The District Magistrate, who opposed this move, found himself transferred away from Aligarh.

It was, in fact, the proofs of official bias that led to a Moslem counter-attack in Hindu districts on 6 November. Public order was in the hands of the Provincial Armed Constabulary, a force which has very few Moslems in its ranks and is about as impartial as the police in Northern Ireland. It has now been replaced by a different force controlled by the central government, whose impartiality is recognised. So far as I could gather, just as many people were killed by the trigger-happy PAC as by the gangs. In Sarai Miyan, which is a mixed area, seven people who went up to their rooftop to see what was happening were shot dead by PAC men from another rooftop. A woman, controlling her tears, showed me a photograph of her dead son – 'I brought him up for 22 years . . . for this'.

This sad story has significant redeeming features. People to whom I spoke were emphatic in placing the blame for their sufferings, not on nearby folk of the other religion, but on gangs of trouble-makers from farther afield, on the RSS or on the PAC. In one street where Moslems live on one side and Hindus (practically within spitting distance) on the other, a man said: 'We're not speaking to each other just now, but we'll be friends again in time.' At the height of the violence, there were numerous instances of Moslems being sheltered by Hindu neighbours or vice versa. Families who have left their homes are already returning. I found nobody ready to express enmity to Moslems (or Hindus, as the case may be) in general. It's also noteworthy that, despite the volatility of Indian students, perfect harmony reigned throughout at the university. In short, it's all much better than Belfast.

THE POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY is hard to pin down. The finger points understandably at the RSS, whose ideology rejects Nehru-style secularism and identifies India with Hinduism, the corollary being that Moslems are an alien element. Ever since 1947 the RSS has stood in the same relation to the Jan Sangh, the party of the Hindu middle-class, as the Orange Order to the Ulster Unionists; and, now that the Jan Sangh is merged in Janata, it provides one-third (the largest single component) of the governing party's parliamentary strength. Congress supporters naturally argue that a government of this complexion is bound to favour repression of the minorities. In the Janata camp, conversely, the allegation – on a *cui bono* reasoning – is that the disorders are provoked by friends of Mrs Gandhi seeking to destabilise the government. There's little doubt that the men who burned the houses in Manik Chowk did belong to the RSS; but this doesn't necessarily implicate the RSS as a national body, still less political leaders drawn from the Jan Sangh, still less Janata as a whole. The infamous Navman has been removed from his Janata post, and Janata leaders in the state to which Aligarh belongs have condemned the attacks on Moslems, which is more than Congress leaders did on earlier occasions. Now that Mrs Gandhi is posing as defender of the minorities, it's worth recalling that Moslems in Delhi were the victims of the worst atrocity of the Emergency, the assault on the Turkman Gate Neighbourhood. At Aligarh, I was convinced by the version given by unprejudiced observers from the university – the Moslem-haters represent elements which have given their allegiance to anyone in power, to Sanjay Gandhi's Youth Congress when it was riding high, and now to the RSS.

Elsewhere in the north of India (these nasty things seldom happen in the south) violence has been mainly directed at the harijans, the 'untouchables' of the caste structure. The political guilt rests mainly on the shoulders of the BLD (Bharatiya Lok Dal), another party now merged in Janata, whose leader is Charan Singh and which represents the landowning peasants mostly belonging to higher castes such as the Jats. In villages all across Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, harijan houses have been burned, men waylaid and beaten up, women raped, meetings of protest fired on by the police and para-military units. Mr Jagjivan Ram, the Defence Minister – who is himself a harijan, though of a somewhat Ralph Buncle variety – was surely accurate when he told me that these incidents have social and economic causes. The harijans, as a class, are the landless labourers who feel the worst pinch of Indian poverty. They own no land; when working as tenant sharecroppers, they are cheated of their share of the harvest; the system of bonded labour condemns them to virtual slavery. It is these conditions that the 'haves' of the village – themselves far from affluent in backward farming areas – are determined to perpetuate.

The hopeful aspect of the clashes is that they are evoked, almost always, by an assertion of harijan rights. As Mr Ram said: 'There's been a spectacular improvement in education for the harijans, not matched by an improvement in opportunity'. Harijans today know that they are entitled to land under redistribution schemes evaded by various dodges, that their share of the harvest is laid down by law, that bonded labour is illegal. They are also likely to have brothers or cousins who have migrated to the cities, where prejudice has been considerably eroded. There are riots at the moment against the job-reservation policy, which allots 46 per cent of government jobs to harijans, tribals, and other disadvantaged groups. When you recall that the jobs have traditionally been handed out by patronage, and when you know that in Bihar (for instance) 22,000 graduates emerge every year to compete for 300 administrative positions, the resentment among the privileged isn't surprising.

The harijan who gets beaten up, sometimes murdered, is the local man who refuses to accept his inherited subjection – the 'uppity nigger' of India. One incident related to me is typical enough. It's traditional for a bridegroom to ride a horse to his wedding, but this custom has always been reserved to the higher castes. In a village in Jammu, a harijan bound for his wedding suddenly appeared on a horse, to the scandal of the solid citizens. The harijan ghetto was attacked – but the clock cannot, finally, be made to stand still. What we're witnessing is something like the 'freedom summer' that gripped the American south in 1963. The point is that grass-roots action is needed to secure what could never be guaranteed by provisions on paper. Indians, in dialogue and where necessary in conflict with other Indians, have to work things out for themselves.

IN THIS CHANGING SCENE, the doings and non-doings of the government are indeed

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Making 'one of the most powerful anti-war films of all time'

R.T.S. NEWS FEATURE CAMERAMAN 1978: NICK DOWNIE FOR THAMES' TV EYE

Below them, the savage bush war for Rhodesia. For three weeks now, TV journalists Nick Downie (left) and Lord Richard Cecil have been on patrol with the Rhodesian army's Fire Force.

Days later on the ground, Cecil is shot dead by a guerrilla. For four hazardous months more, Downie lives with and films the killers and the killed, on *Front Line Rhodesia.*

The completed film was transmitted last September, one of the first stories in Thames' new current affairs programme, **TV EYE.** There was public and critical shock and acclaim.

'Not since Vietnam has there been such horrific scenes of war as Nick Downie showed us on ITV's **TV EYE.** In my opinion Mr Downie has made one of the most powerful anti-war films of all time,' wrote James Murray in the Daily Express.

Many viewers shared what Downie himself voiced: 'It is hard to imagine what it feels like to kill a man who is only a few feet away and to watch his expression as he is torn apart by a machine gun. I think I've caught an insight not only of the war in Rhodesia, but of the nature of war itself.'

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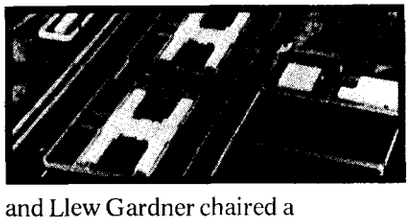
Front Line Rhodesia has won Nick Downie his second successive News Feature Cameraman of the Year award from the Royal Television Society. Last year it was for his report on the Polisario rebellion in the Moroccan desert, for Thames' This Week – the programme which became **TV EYE** under new editor Mike Townson:

Nick Downie was unable to collect his award – he's at work again.

This time, with reporter Vanya Kewley, Nick has gone to the Far East – to sea, filming the plight of the refugee boat people as they sail from Vietnam. It's the kind of commitment that helps keep **TV EYE** in the news, or making the news.

When a million people marched through Tehran, Julian Manyon was there for **TV EYE**... when President Samoza of Nicaragua decided to justify the bombing of his own cities, Jonathan Dimbleby was there to interview him... and as the news of the Guyana massacre horrified the world, **TV EYE** covered the story by satellite from San Francisco, the home of the cult, the place where relatives waited.

At home too, the full story of the test-tube baby, Louise Brown, was first told by Peter Williams on **TV EYE**... Peter Taylor revealed exactly what conditions were like inside the 'H blocks' in Ulster's Maze prison...



and Llew Gardner chaired a remarkable confrontation between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the trade union leaders in the depths of the winter crisis.

Now, once more, we're waiting for Nick Downie's next film...

TV EYE

8.30pm Thursdays on ITV

THAMES

irrelevant enough to make anyone stop reading the papers. To be fair, this government's main fault – its immovable complacency – has some justification in a good record in the material sphere. A few facts are worth jotting down because they are so seldom reported in the world press. Food output (now 126 million tons of cereals) is so satisfactory that India, pleading for American wheat a decade ago, is beginning to think in terms of exports and a distinguished scientist has projected a future 'Indian bread-basket'. The green revolution, which in its first phase only benefited wheat farmers, has now produced a breakthrough in new strains of rice; accordingly, rice production shot up 25 per cent in 1978. In that year of achievement, 6,500,000 acres of dry land were brought under irrigation, a record for any country at any time. There were impressive advances in power generation and use of fertilisers, while 350,000 new tube-wells were dug. Inflation has been overcome, with a rise in the price index of a mere 1 per cent since last April, and actual reductions in prices of important commodities such as tea, sugar and cotton. The foreign exchange position is sound. It's true that some of these successes are the fruit of plans laid before Janata took office, and that four good monsoons in a row represent an unusual run of luck. In politics, however, a good record is a good record.

Very possibly, the government has served India well less by what it's done than by letting other people – those closer to the action – do things. Decentralisation and local initiative, so long despised, are now in favour; an adventurous report from a committee headed by the veteran Socialist Ashok Mehta urges a sweeping transfer of decision-making power from the New Delhi bureaucracy to the states, the districts and the village councils. Mr Desai and others are slow to welcome the new doctrine, but the districts have aready been entrusted with the handling of £2,000 million previously spent only on higher instructions. In a diverse country like India, experiment and variety can only be beneficial. It used to be the accepted doctrine that the nation could only progress by the states and the centre working in political harmony. One sees now that states like Karnataka, West Bengal, Punjab and Tamil Nadu are all pretty well governed, although the first of these is ruled by Congress, the second by the Marxist Communists, and the other two by regional parties.

THE GOVERNMENT in New Delhi, steered by the nerveless hand of Morarji Desai, contributes little but unrealistic hopes. Interviewing the Prime Minister, one is startled to see how remote he is from Indian realities, and how he swings between bland satisfaction and shrugging resignation in the face of difficulties. (In his view, for instance, there have been communal clashes ever since 1893 and events like Aligarh present no exceptional problem.) He has become very fond of projections dated in years – thus, he told me that illiteracy will be abolished in six to seven years, something that no conceivable government could achieve. But, except that India could do with a new Prime Minister, it doesn't much matter.

The Government has certainly failed to provide the inspiration or the sense of direction for which India is crying out, and has largely dissipated the goodwill that it disposed of when it took office. Scandals, squabbles, and an obsession with personal *amour-propre* don't help. Mr Charah Singh resigned as Home Minister six months ago, and the Prime Minister is holding the portfolio while prolonged negotiations to lure him back take their weary way. Making a curious mirror-image of the story of Sanjay Gandhi, Mr Desai's son Kanti has been accused of a series of corrupt dealings, which involve his father's authority because the latter was either Finance Minister or Prime Minister at the relevant times. It seems that the official prosecutors can't be trusted to press the charges adequately, so there's a demand for a commission of inquiry, and the Upper House (in which the opposition has a majority) has refused to proceed with any other business until it's set up. Faced with Mr Desai's obstinate refusal to permit this action, Mr Advani – who is leader of the Upper House as well as being Minister of Information – resigned, but has now withdrawn his resignation; the negotiated resignation has become a hallmark of this government. The process of calling Mrs Gandhi to account for her misdeeds in power has been handled in the most maladroit possible way, with a token spell in prison for contempt of Parliament giving her a predictable martyr's halo, but no real trial.

Predictions in the British press of a comeback for Mrs Gandhi, however, are distinctly premature. Charan Singh is toying with the idea of allying himself with her, and this would be a fairly serious matter in view of his popularity among the influential landowning peasants; but he has only 30-odd followers in Parliament (if indeed they all followed him) so the switch couldn't bring down the Government. Mrs Gandhi, meanwhile, has her own problems. She has proved that she is still a formidable vote-getter, but hasn't yet succeeded in reuniting Congress and achieving the submission of the politicians who tried to dispose of her in 1977 – understandably, since they don't wish to subject themselves to her autocratic and revengeful style of leadership. The by-elections this winter have gone badly for Janata, but no worse than for many governments (in Britain, for example) after two years in office, and they can be taken as a healthy reproof to Ministers who have proved unworthy of the hopes placed in them. The constitution provides for a fixed-term Parliament, and only once since independence have elections been held ahead of time. With 304 seats in a House of 542 (the opposition including the Marxists and the regional parties who are no friends to Mrs Gandhi) Janata can scarcely be forced to the polls before 1982.

There is, nevertheless, a joker in the pack. Since Nehru died, Indian politicians have shown an increasing reluctance to abide by the parliamentary rules, and a willingness to call into play 'the politics of the street' – the methods of mass protest and organised lawbreaking that gave the British so much trouble. Janata leaders, indeed, resorted to this technique when they launched the agitation that gave Mrs Gandhi her excuse for the Emergency. They may fume, but can't don the mantle of righteousness, if it is ever used against them. The orchestrated street demonstrations, leading to 10,000 arrests, that met Mrs Gandhi's committal to prison perhaps give a foretaste of what is possible. Her popularity is not yet so great, by a long chalk, to warrant an effort to topple the Government by this means, but it will grow if disillusion with Janata is allowed to gather pace. Then, in India's unstable state, anything could happen.

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The city the bankers are killing

Leeds, England, is a city about the same size as Cleveland, Ohio. England, we are often told, as envious eyes are cast towards America, is ungovernable. But it is in Cleveland that the Mayor is having difficulty governing in the face of the financial blackmail of the banking community. Already the City has been forced to sell off its port, its transport system, its parks and even its zoo. Now Cleveland has a mayor who is fighting back but, as ALEXANDER COCKBURN and JAMES RIDGEWAY report, his chances of success are slim.

IMPASSIVE AND DESOLATE, Cleveland sits at the foot of the Great Lakes, a trade terminal for the industrial heartland of America At this time of year the cold winter wind whips off Lake Erie and slams into the big nineteenth century buildings and modern palaces of corporate downtown The inner city heart decays around the blacks and remaining white working class while the suburban extremities swell with those who have managed to flee "Burn on, big river, burn on," sang Randy Newman about the polluted Cuyahoga which burst into flames some years ago In the hotel dining rooms the men come and go, talking of the price of iron ore and coal

What happened here on the morning of Friday, December 15, was an utterly traditional encounter in American politics Cleveland's leading banker told the Mayor – as the Mayor recounts it – that the banks would bail out the city if the city did as it was told In a slightly less traditional response, the Mayor told the banker to get lost As a result Cleveland is in technical default on $15 million of short-term loans due to six Ohio banks Ohio Governor, James Rhodes, is introducing legislation that would essentially remove control of the city's finances from the elected city government and place it in the hands of a commission dominated by outsiders It seems likely that in a referendum on February 27, Cleveland's voters will approve an income tax increase and the sale of the city-owned municipal light system, severely limiting Cleveland's control over its own finances.

Thus Cleveland, which over the last decade has managed to dispose of vital organs such as its sewer system, its port, its parks, its transit system, its athletic stadium and its zoo, will finally lose the last appurtenances of independent status and will become a museum exhibit for historians of the American urban crisis The mayor will repose in the spectacular City Hall, the council will confer, the poor whites and poor blacks will continue to subsist in the filth and decay of the inner city: all tragicomic ornamentation to the serious business of the day which is, as it always has been in Cleveland since the mid-19th century, the amassing of large amounts of wealth by a small number of people

THE BANKER WHO HELD a gun to the mayor's head that December morning was Brock Weir, chief executive officer of the Cleveland Trust Company Weir spoke with an authority which is amply justified A famous study in the mid-1960's by the late congressman Wright Patman, then chairman of the house banking committee, showed Cleveland Trust Company's ties, through interlocking directorships and share holdings, with virtually every major corporation in Cleveland. Figuring prominently were Republic Steel, Jones and Laughlin, Sherman Williams, Cleveland Cliffs, Oglebay Norton, Higbee Company, Island Creek Coal, Taft Broadcasting, Bobbie Brooks, Eaton Yale and Towne, White Motor, and Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company Patman also reported that Cleveland Trust owned substantial amounts of the other banks in Cleveland, including the National City Bank, itself the second-largest in the city Patman declared at the time that 'the pattern of bank stockholder ownership and control in Cleveland, Ohio, is perhaps the most interesting and at the same time the most alarming of the ten cities under study in this report '

Camera Press

Father and son: John D. Rockefeller, left, Cleveland's pre-eminent, and richest, citizen, founder of Standard Oil.

Indeed Brock Weir, imported from California in 1973 to 'jazz up' the bank (his words), should be considered the actual chief operating officer of the city The real City Hall is the Union Club, where the businessmen meet in a spirit of mutual concern and self-help that would have been the envy of the Paris Commune of 1871 The spirit of business confidence in Cleveland rests on very solid foundations The city is most famous as a centre for iron and steel, coalescing around the old Hanna mining interests Its pre-eminent citizen has been John D Rockefeller, who began his business career on the Cleveland docks as a clerk and bookkeeper The present governor, Rhodes, is fond of saying that 'Profit is not a dirty word in Ohio,' and such words decorously echo the animating principles of the greatest businessman of the 19th century. 'The only time I ever saw John Rockefeller enthusiastic,' a man told Ida Tarbell, author of the history of the Standard Oil Company, 'was when a report came in from the creek that his buyer had secured a cargo of oil at a figure much below the market price ' Rockefeller combined his different interests into the Standard Oil Company in 1870, with consequences for Cleveland and the world abundantly evident ever since

In more recent times Cleveland industrialists were paramount in the reorganization of the coal industry in its modern form Shortly before World War II Cleveland blueblood George Humphrey, then president of the M A Hanna company, joined George Love in Pittsburgh in buying up various coal properties, including those previously owned by the Rockefellers and the Mellons The resulting colossus was the Consolidation Coal Company, which, under the leadership of Love and with Humphrey as the silent partner, was to dominate the coal industry for the next generation

As with oil and coal, so in iron and steel did Cleveland acquire the reputation of being a tightly knit, determined, and powerful business centre In the 1930s according to economist Paul Sweezy, there was the Rockefeller group, the Morgan group, and, near the top of the list, the Cleveland group Cleveland trust (now a one-bank holding company) was viewed as the hub for the city's industrial enterprises When Brock Weir told Cleveland's mayor 'either/or,' he was merely echoing a century's worth of extremely assured and dogmatic business confidence And as Weir put it recently, 'On 15 December we decided to kick back '

THE BOYISH, THIRTY-TWO YEAR OLD mayor on the other side of the table from Weir was Dennis Kucinich He was born in Cleveland and bounced from neighbourhood to neighbourhood as his truck driver father attempted to make a go of things with a rapidly increasing family Frank Kucinich is of Croatian descent and Virginia, Dennis's mother, is Irish As Kucinich grew up, the situation in Cleveland was becoming more and more volatile Poor whites from Appalachia and blacks from the south trekked into town in search of jobs At the same time the middle and upper classes were entrenching themselves in the suburbs. The inner city became more depressed and the tax base declined By the mid-'60s Cleveland was ready to explode Riots in Hough, a black Cleveland ghetto, broke out in the summer of 1966 and smaller confrontations occurred almost nightly in the early months of 1967 At this point the city fathers, naturally perturbed by the prospect that rioting might extend into the more prosperous parts of town, allocated money for civic improvement, and helped finance the campaign to elect a popular black, Carl Stokes, as mayor They hoped Stokes would keep things quiet The amity was short-lived, however, and Stokes was followed

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in City Hall by a person intrinsically far more congenial to the local business folk, in the form of Ralph J Perk, a white Republican perhaps best remembered for two incidents: setting his hair on fire with a welding torch while opening a new edifice, and his wife's rejection of an invitation to the White House on the grounds that it interfered with her bowling night

There was more to Perk, though, than these two episodes might indicate The time is recalled, for example, when Perk, under investigation in one scandal, claimed he had been under sedation when he made out a personal check for $5,000 for his share of a computer business run by some of his employees while he was a County official. Perk soon won the reputation of 'Mayor Giveaway', during his tenure in 1972-5: the city's tax income fell by $30 million a year, while the population declined from 750,000 to 650,000 Housing was abandoned and industry fled to the suburbs. Amid these travails Perk, hoping to win a seat in the U S. Senate, did not wish to bring upon himself the odium of raising taxes On the other hand, Perk could not very well turn the swelling tide of short-term civic debt into long-term bonds unless he raised property taxes to finance the bond repayment

In this dilemma Perk hit upon a simple solution: if you cannot pay for the city, sell it off. Thus it was that over the Perk years many of Cleveland's civic assets were excised The transit system deal provides a good example of Perk in action In 1975 its assets were $72 million, with net operating income of $28 million Perk proposed to sell the system for $70 million to the newly established regional transit authority But in fact the city received only $8.8 million, as repayment of loans made to the system, and $1 1 million for parking lots which were thrown into the deal And so the city transport system passed from Cleveland's control into an authority dominated by businessmen and lawyers who used the acquisition as a wellspring for life-enhancing real estate and construction deals

One of the notable contributions of Mayor Perk was the organisation of city financing in such a way that no one had the slightest idea of what was going on. After several years of trying to figure out the books, Cleveland State University professors John Burke and Edrick Weld concluded in one study that 'The city's accounting system predates Medici banking.' The professors said they had 'no idea if corruption existed at City Hall, but since each account is so isolated from the other, effective cash management is impossible, leaving the system vulnerable.' The city's accounting system may have predated Medici banking, as Burke and Weld suggested, but it certainly immediately predated the administration of Kucinich, now being charged with having inaugurated anarchy in City Hall with his youthful populist shock troops No such cries of outrage emerged from the Union Club during the Baroque regime of Mayor Perk.

DENNIS KUCINICH ENTERED City Hall as mayor in 1978, after first being elected councilman in 1969 He has been widely portrayed ever since by both the Cleveland newspapers and the National Media as a brash, smart-alecky punk In short, 'Dennis The Menace'. In this hostile rendition his close associates and his cabinet members are seen as recruits from high school, barely out of their teens and ludicrously unprepared for

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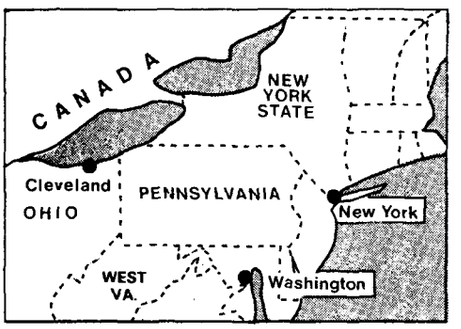
Cleveland mayor, Dennis Kucinich, left, meets political opponent and business's Uncle Tom, George Forbes.



the administration of a major American city. The supposed power behind Kucinich's throne, a former United Autworker official called Bob Weissman, is described as a mad radical Evidence of Weissman's impetuous behaviour is adduced by his alleged censorship of a mayoral press conference by the abrupt tactic of yanking a radio transmission line out of the wall

No single event captured the tone of the coverage of Kucinich's administration better than the mayor's public firing, on television, of Chief of Police Richard Hongisto Hongisto, formerly a sheriff in San Francisco, had been much liked on the Liberal end of the spectrum for his enlightened attitudes as displayed in the West Coast His appointment by Kucinich seemed to augur well for a reforming regime in Cleveland But then, it seemed, Hongisto was accusing Kucinich of having asked him to commit 'unethical acts' and Kucinich – after giving Hongisto 24 hours to come up with the evidence – had precipitately fired his police chief

Kucinich's natural foes had no problems with making damaging use of the incident and his natural allies on the Left began to wonder if Kucinich was a megalomaniac who had best be shunned. In fact Hongisto never used the phrase 'unethical acts', which was put in his mouth by the Cleveland Press, and never substantiated the charges The damage was done The firing led to a recall campaign, ardently sponsored by business, which Kucinich survived by only a few hundred votes. The image remaining in general circulation was of a ranting adolescent, deservedly under increasing discipline by responsible souls zealous to retrieve the honour and fiscal probity of Cleveland Much of this is absurd caricature and indeed some reporters on the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* were so distressed by the biassed coverage of the mayor that they asked for an editorial committee to deliberate on the need for editorial objectivity. This puissant body, it should be added, finally concluded that the *Plain Dealer* had acted with the noblest impartiality

The dislike for Kucinich and the attacks on him go far deeper than his brusque manner, his young aides or even the antics of Weissman There are profound reasons why Kucinich is loathed by the city fathers Unlike almost any other U S Mayor, he has directly confronted the businessmen who run Cleveland, on matters that have previously gone unchallenged The usual procedure for any Left-Liberal politician looking to gain office is to attack the big-shot crooks and even suggest that banks are at the heart of it all Next thing you see is the same fellow, now in office, having serious conversation with the financiers in a common-front assault on the problems of urban decay, boycotts by capital, corporate flight and other elements of urban crisis. Soon thereafter come cutbacks in the City budget, closing of the schools and hospitals, importunings and bribes for business to stay in town, talk of thrift and proclamations that all fat in view (though not that belonging to the broad bottoms of the rich) will be 'cut to the bone'

Kucinich campaigned on the platform of what is sometimes hopefully called 'The New Urban Populism', which means getting corporations to pay their taxes, forcing the savings and loans banks to invest in low income areas, pushing for publicly-owned utilities, halting capital flights, protecting the consumer, assailing industrial pollution of air and water, cleaning up the police department, fighting for the rights of the citizenry to run their own government, ending 'no-bid' contracts and gener-

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ally trying to prize the vice-like grip of all the usual villains off the windpipe of the public weal. Proclaiming that 'the basis of genuine reform is economic reform' Kucinich promoted himself to the voters along these lines and the astounding thing is that he actually appears to have meant what he said. To a taste for confrontation politics, which seems to have been an innate characteristic of Kucinich, we may add some contributing factors such as that when he entered City Hall there was no *eminence grise* on his team to point the way to the smoke filled room and help with introductions to the above-mentioned financiers. Thus unguided, Kucinich soon started interfering in some very sensitive areas.

THE MOST IMPORTANT of these relates to the tax base of the city, which bears strongly in turn upon the city's ability to float bonds to get out of the mess inherited from Perk. Kucinich ran against any increase in property taxes, which would most sorely affect his working-class constitutuents (a majority in Cleveland) who pay 68 per cent of such taxes. At the same time Kucinich pledged himself to stop the practice of providing tax reliefs for major corporations that undertake projects in the city. For example, shortly before Kucinich took office, the City Council granted an abatement in property taxes to the huge National City Bank for its new downtown office building. The abatement saved National City about $14 million in taxes that it otherwise would have had to pay over 20 years. Kucinich successfully vetoed a plan under which the City would effectively pay for a big ore dock for Republic Steel, thus saving the corporation $128 million.

If the tax-abatement dispute indicated the seriousness of Kucinich's onslaught on big business, his longtime defence of the city-owned municipal light plant is at least symbolic of his devotion to publicly owned enterprise. The Municipal Light System (Muny), organised in 1905, is a modest enterprise, providing electricity to no more than 20 per cent of the city's population. The bulk of the city electricity comes from the Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company (CEI). And CEI and the Cleveland Trust enjoy a very friendly business relationship. Two members of Cleveland Trust's board of directors are also members of CEI's board, Cleveland Trust controls voting rights to 1 8 per cent of CEI's shares. The bank has loaned the private utility

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Ralph Perk, Cleveland mayor before Kucinich: set his hair alight and sold off the city.

money and it is one of several banks that helped to finance the purchase by CEI and other utilities of two profitable coal mines. Cleveland Trust manages about half of CEI's $140-million pension plan and acts as CEI's registrars.

An overriding goal of CEI for years has been to devour Muny. However weak, the public company bore the stigma of not being private and presented a threat, however remote, of being a potential source of competition to CEI, by linking up with other publicly owned concerns. Muny is a dilapidated and fragile symbol of public power. Most important, it does not control its own power supply. In the United States, where most utilities are privately owned it is hard – even assuming the desire is there – to control the price of electricity: the utilities own their own fuel supply, and can thus bypass the regulatory process by increasing their fuel costs, hence jacking up their charges. To control the price of electricity you have to control the energy sources. Muny had to get its power supply from CEI, which provided it in the most reluctant and inconvenient manner. A US nuclear regulatory board recently found that CEI was charging Muny four times what it charged its large industrial users. According to the regulatory group, the transfer of power from CEI to Muny was engineered in such a way as to result in blackouts in the city.

The findings of the nuclear regulatory board fuelled an antitrust suit by the city against CEI on grounds that CEI and its neighbouring private utility had conspired to violate the antitrust laws. That case is expected to go to trial shortly, and the Justice Department has filed a friend-of-the-court brief in Muny's favour. Kucinich has unceasingly defended Muny and he believes – along with many impartial observers – that the city has an excellent chance of winning the $328 million suit. If proved right, Kucinich would have more than enough to pay off the $15 million that has placed the city in technical default, as well as the $100 million in debt due to be paid in the next year. With the antitrust suit coming to trial, the objective of CEI and its supporters in the banks and industry has been to dispose of this unwelcome dispute as expeditiously as possible. The opportunity seemed to come in the December encounter between Brock Weir and the Mayor.

All during 1978 the Kucinich administration had been at work drawing up a plan that would permit renewal of the $15 million worth of short-term debt, and would, more importantly, allow the city to move ahead in the regaining of investor confidence after the Perk years and Kucinich's inauguration. Advisers included the First Boston Corporation and Salomon Brothers, two upstanding investment banking houses. The plan included Kucinich's willingness to propose a 0.5 per cent tax increase, and the appointment of a financial adviser – agreeable to both banks and the city – to shepherd the city along in its operations. Kucinich insists that the banks were closely consulted during the Autumn and were basically well-disposed to this plan, despite his threats to hamper their operations if they failed to provide funds for the government and residents of the city.

There was a story in November that National City Bank were going to pull out of the rescue but on 14 December 1978 Kucinich met with leaders of the six local banks to discuss rolling over the $15 million debt. As the mayor describes it: 'One bank balked. Brock Weir, chairman of Cleveland Trust, resisted attempts to solidify a consensus. He indicated that he had reasons for not participating and if anyone wanted to know his reasons they could step outside the room and he would tell them.' Weir's recalcitrant attitude aborted the meeting and the following day, on 'neutral ground' in the offices of a local garment manufacturer the mayor met with Weir and City Council President George Forbes, a black and a devoted friend of business. This encounter was altogether more brusque. 'What happened at the meeting was this. I was told in no uncertain terms by Brock Weir that the City of Cleveland could avoid default if I sold the municipal light system and that the price of Cleveland Trust's participation in the plan was the sale of Muny Light and that if I didn't sell Muny Light the City of Cleveland would be in default. If I did sell Muny Light not only would we avoid default, because Cleveland Trust would renew our loans, but Cleveland Trust through Brock Weir would lead the way in getting the City of Cleveland $50 million in credit. They would help solve all our financial problems. All I had to do was sell Muny Light. I didn't say much at the meeting. Forbes and Weir did most of the talking. Forbes was telling me what a great future I would have in politics if only I would try to get along with people and work with people and this could mean the end of my political career.'

The two others present at this session have different recollections. 'The Mayor told a lie,' says Forbes, adding that the sale of Muny never came up but that Weir had promised 'to use his influence' to get $50 million if the city came up with an acceptable plan. In an advertisement in the Cleveland papers Weir said that 'we want to make it unmistakeably clear, despite what you have heard or read, that Cleveland has not and will not make the sale of the Municipal Light plant a condition of our willingness to continue to refinance Cleveland's debt.' On December 15 the city went into technical default although the banks finally agreed not to call the loans until after the 27 February referendum on the tax increase and sale of Muny Light. Just three

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weeks ago Weir confided to reporters that he and the other banks were thinking of putting together a consortium to give the city a long-term loan. He also told the reporters that he favoured the notion of the state overlooking the city's finances, a tax increase in the city and . . . the sale of Muny Light.

Kucinich once wrote a master's thesis on confrontation politics. In his style and tactics he brings to mind the late Saul Alinsky, the Chicago community organizer. We mentioned Alinsky and Kucinich replied, 'I'm confronted with a situation that is quite different than ever faced Alinsky. Alinsky was never really on the inside. When you are on the inside the pressures are much greater on you to conform to the status quo. The pressures are much greater on you to fall in line with the established way of doing things, and to take up alliance with the established powers in the community. But I haven't done that and I won't do that, because that's what is doing material harm to our democratic system of government. Such alliances are what are slowly creating a corporate dictatorship in this country.'

The only word any reasonable person might quibble with here is 'slowly'. It did not take long in New York to establish what Kucinich calls 'corporate dictatorship'.

That city's financial crisis came in 1975. Within four months all the major fiscal decisions for the largest urban electorate in the country were being made by two unelected boards with no accountability to the voters. The first two decisions made by these businessmen and investment bankers were to raise the mass transit fare by 43 per cent without a public hearing and to abolish, after 129 years, the tradition of free tuition at City University. Four years later these two boards (The Municipal Assistance Corporation and the Emergency Financial Control Board) still have final budgetary authority, and will do so for the foreseeable future.

Kucinich was a mayor who said no. And he is paying the price, in being widely regarded as a lunatic. He is recruiting some allies. Ralph Nader, the consumer advocate, is taking an interest in the operation of Cleveland's banks. One congressman suggested that the Federal Reserve Board take an interest – a notion reduced in substance when it was discovered that Brock Weir is an adviser on the Reserve Board in his area. At least Nader, an experienced campaigner in these matters is counter-attacking on Kucinich's behalf. 'Brock Weir,' he said the other day, 'is the Emperor of Cleveland and George Forbes his Uncle Tom.' Nader has now challenged Weir to public debate in the largest auditorium in Cleveland. The struggle is hotting up before likely defeat for the forces of progress at the end of February. Last week Mayor Kucinich shouted down the long distance telephone to us, 'I feel like a war correspondent reporting from the front.' His problem, in the United States today, is that almost no one wants to print his version of the battle.

Outside the United States, there are still many people who still think that 'dynamic' capitalism, insulated there from creeping socialist decay, has produced enviable answers to the problem of social organisation. Cleveland, like the rest of the industrial mid-west, does not generally figure on the itineraries of political and journalistic tourists visiting the US. But it would be a good thing if it did.

Law

Contempt and the Thorpe Committal

LAST NOVEMBER the Thorpe Affair became the Thorpe Case: in three months time it will be the Thorpe Trial. Since the strands first began to trail through the headlines four years ago, the tale has reached a degree of complexity baffling to all but the most assiduous journalists, which is why a book published this week performs an extremely necessary and useful function, and at just the right time. *The Thorpe Committal** is an account, told from the press benches, of what happened during the committal proceedings shortly before Christmas at Minehead; and it explains, clearly and as far as possible chronologically, how the Crown and its witnesses put their case against Jeremy Thorpe and his three co-accused. It tells the readers what they will want (and certainly ought) to know if the piecemeal contemporary reporting of the forthcoming Old Bailey trial is going to make more than marginal sense.

Ought to know? As the authors point out, no book of this sort has been published before in Britain. It is certainly not confined to a 'report of proceedings' in the sense in which lawyers understand that term: and it discloses more than the potential London jury can expect to hear from counsel in court in April. For this reason it takes the authors, their publishers and printers into one of the minefields of uncertainty with which the English law of contempt abounds, and has abounded for a scandalously long time. It is twenty years since a national newspaper was advised by a leading Q.C. that:

> the only help an editor can get from a lawyer if he desires to publish anything which is connected with pending proceedings and which has not been said in open court is an estimation of the risk he is taking . . . even for a trained lawyer the task of estimating the risk is difficult especially as the outlooks of particular judges vary so much . . . undoubtedly some judges think that while proceedings are pending newspapers should publish nothing . . . except what emerges in open court, while others think that motions for contempt should be discouraged. But no-one can foresee what judges will hear any particular motion.

In other words: 'I know that crossing a minefield is an unpleasant enough business by itself without

being asked to do it blindfold, but I can offer no alternative; and I should warn you that any awards and decorations are likely to be posthumous'. Despite the passage of the Criminal Justice Act 1967 – section 3 of which 'closed' committal proceedings unless 'opened' at the request of an individual accused, as happened in this case – that advice remains as valid today as it was then.

IT IS INTERESTING to reflect that, while the authorities steadfastly refuse to come to grips with the problem, section 3 has probably opened a passage to safety for this book, through what one may call its 'reverse effect'. Since the law expressly *allows* reports of opened committal proceedings to be published (which section 36 extends beyond newspaper accounts), the Attorney General can hardly be heard to say that a lack of contemporaneity, or the fact that the book is a further reiteration of the prosecution case before the defence has been heard, or the fact that it includes 'colour' a London juror might not otherwise hear about – constitutes a 'risk that the course of justice will be seriously impeded or prejudiced' (which is the currently accepted criterion of liability). Whether that assessment is right or wrong can only await the Attorney General's perusal over the next few weeks. He may also care to reflect on another problem: when the 1967 Act was passed, one of the reasons given for allowing commital proceedings to be opened at the request of an accused was to alert potential witnesses who might not otherwise come forward. The book chronicles the reactions of Lord Goodman, Lord Stow Hill and Mr Louis Kirby when their names were mentioned during the committal. The last two said they felt inhibited from speaking out for fear of infringing the possibilities of a fair trial: sadly, Lord Stow Hill died at the beginning of the year, so we may never have his comment. Lord Goodman, however, let himself go in the *Telegraph* with a forceful and emphatic assertion that the allegations about him were 'baseless, demented and . . . (such) that no small kindergarten child would believe'. Does the law of contempt tolerate – or ought it to – assertions by outside individuals of their innocence before a jury embarks on its task? The law gives no answer.

It remains to be seen whether either Lord Goodman or Mr Kirby step into the witness box in due course; but what are they, or anyone else, to do when the purpose of the Act in alerting them is achieved, and yet, because neither prosecution nor defence are interested, or because the law of contempt enjoins them to silence, they are denied a platform? Lord Goodman is fortunate in that most of his public utterances are news, but what of the millions of others who enjoy no such privilege?

WERE THERE ANY DOUBT that 'contempt' is nothing more than a matter of the personal feelings of the judge of the moment, this must be removed by the fact that, in the Colonel B case last week, a group of Law Lords, by no means radical in overall complexion, thumpingly supported the NUJ, *Peace News* and *The Leveller* against Lord Chief Justice Widgery.

Government after government has confronted the problem of contempt of court – and looked the other way. The Phillimore Report was subjected to an inadequate and unhelpful process of redigestion in a Green Paper last year: not, it should be remembered, because it heralded any liberating or clarifying legislation, but because the government felt obliged to demonstrate to the European Court at Strasbourg in the *Sunday Times* thalidomide case that it had the problem 'still very much in mind'. The Green Paper asserts that there will have to be a further period of study and digestion once that judgment is available. What is in fact lacking is not erudition, or appreciation, or time for reflection, but the will and determination to do something. And as long as there is an election in the offing, of course . . . well, we all have our priorities, don't we?

Antony Whitaker

**The Thorpe Committal* by Peter Chippindale and David Leigh. Arrow Books, 95p.*

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Workers' co-op . . . British Gas . . .

Kirkby's new backer

Christopher Hird writes: A mysterious private sector rescue plan for the workers' co-operative, Kirkby Manufacturing and Engineering, has averted a Cabinet row over the affair.

Last week the government's Industrial Development Advisory Board – a panel of businessmen, merchant bankers and two trades unionists – advised against giving further financial aid to the Liverpool based co-op which makes central heating radiators. The co-op wanted an immediate £1m. to finance working capital and pay for redundancies. To ensure the money was properly spent they proposed a set of safeguards which involved the appointment of PA management consultants to run the company and outside trustees to own the co-op's shares. The application was supported by a professional examination of the central heating radiator market, which is very buoyant at the moment. For the first time in its history the co-op looked both as if it had learnt the lessons of the past and was a reasonable business proposition.

IDAB decided against giving the co-op further aid for several reasons. They have no confidence in the leaders of the co-op. Last year IDAB gave modified support to an application from a small private company, Worcester Engineering, for £4.3m. to takeover KME. The application was the result of a study by a working party, a member of which had been nominated by the co-op, whose leaders committed themselves to accepting the working party's conclusion. In the event the Worcester Engineering scheme fell through and most members of IDAB consider that this was at least partly because of the behaviour of Jack Spriggs, one of the co-op leaders.

Although there is a high demand for radiators now, IDAB reckon that there could be a big increase in capacity within the next 18 months and the co-op does not have the managerial, marketing or design capability to keep its place in the industry under those circumstances. Nor were they convinced that a firm of management consultants, hired from outside, could do the job; they felt it was important to have an external company with some experience in manufacturing.

Furthermore the IBAD were not convinced that the redundancies proposed by the co-op – which would reduce the workforce to 520, compared with almost 1000 when the co-op started in 1974 – were sufficient. But IDAB did express the view that the government should consider giving aid to any company which bought KME from the Receiver, whose appointment is virtually inevitable unless KME gets more money.

IDAB's judgment boiled down to the view that there might be a future for the factory, but the workers were not capable of securing it. Some members of the Cabinet, however, thought slightly differently. When the application and the IDAB report were discussed at cabinet committee, Tony Benn, Michael Foot and Albert Booth all had reservations about following IDAB's advice and wanted the issue to go on the agenda for the Cabinet meeting on 8 February. It has been a convention that, in the absence of unanimity on the committee, such problems would go to the whole Cabinet. However Callaghan, dealing another blow to Cabinet Government, suddenly changed the rules and said the majority view in the committee, supported by Industry Minister Varley, must prevail.

On Monday 5 February, leaders of the co-op met industry ministry officials and told them they had a new proposal, which involved some private sector money. The details are sketchy but the proposal involves some private section organisation – not necessarily a manufacturing company – putting up money for the co-op, which would then make a further application for government funds. Given that the private sector funds are, apparently, substantial, such an application would stand a much better chance of success.

While the bona fides of the private sector sponsor are being checked and an application hurriedly prepared, the Department of Industry have agreed to wait and the Cabinet discussion has been shelved for a week or so, while the new application goes to IDAB.

Gas profit explosion

Christopher Hird writes: British Gas Corporation will make profits of around £300 million in the year which ends next month. This is two-thirds more than it made last year and is only the most startling example of the changes which have been going on in the nationalised industries' finances. Most of them – shipbuilding being a conspicuous exception – have been either making more money than expected, or investing less than expected, or both.

British Gas has been one of the most consistent financial success stories for the government – largely because of its plentiful supply of cheap North Sea gas. By the end of March British Gas will have repaid, within the last three years, over £1,100 million worth of government loans. The Treasury's delight may be only momentarily tempered by the fact that this is £630 million more than forecast.

Because of the unusual – and usually extremely conservative – accounting policies which the nationalised industries employ, pre-tax profits are not a particularly useful measure of their financial performance, despite the prominent coverage they receive in the press. It is more useful to look at the total of their internally generated funds, which includes pre-tax profits and all write-offs.

If British Gas keeps to its current forecast for 1978/79 – and the cold winter virtually ensures that it will – its internally generated funds over the last three years will have been over £580 million more than the Treasury forecast. Take, for example, the current year. In April last year, with its budget, the government produced its forecasts for the nationalised industries' capital investment programmes in 1978/79 and how these were to be financed: by internally generated funds or by borrowing from the government. At that time it reckoned that British Gas would be investing about £299 million this year, would generate £470 million internally and thus be able to repay the government £172 million. The figures look rather different now. Investment will be slightly lower than expected at £278 million but profits are going to be much higher: internal funds will be £687 million and so the government will get back £409 million. In other words, this year British Gas will be £237 million below the cash limit imposed by the government to control British Gas.

There are three main reasons for British Gas's startling performance in 1978/79. First, the cold summer meant that gas sales were higher than expected. Second, supplies were cheaper than expected and third, the improved cash flow that the first two factors caused meant lower interest charges.

British Gas were well below their cash limit in 1976/77 and 1977/78 as well: in both cases the weather was given as a reason and (in 1976/77) there was a price increase and (in 1977/78) the strength of the pound added to the list. Furthermore, in future, British Gas's capital investment programme is going to be much lower than expected a year ago. These reductions will be reflected in the cash limits set by the government but the total call on public sector resources will be less than earlier expected. In total, over the next three years British Gas expects to invest some £437 million less than the government was budgeting for a year ago. The main reason is the revision of costs of offshore development.

Investigation shows that the experience of British Gas is by no means unique. Many nationalised industries' investment programmes are slipping and several are managing to keep well within their cash limits. Take the Electricity Council, for example. In 1977/78 it borrowed £64 million, compared with a cash limit of £164 million: this year it will borrow under £100 million, compared with a cash limit of £339 million. This is partly because investment is lower, but partly because profits are higher: internally generated funds are expected to amount to £845 million – almost £100 million more than in 1977/78.

Both last year and this year British National Oil will borrow much less than planned, because of delays in oil exploration. British Steel, whose losses in 1978/79 were £40 million higher than expected last April, is expected to borrow £75 million less than planned because of reductions in investment. The Post Office expects to repay the government £153 million, compared with a cash limit of £33 million.

Boyd's ploy

Anna Coote writes: Some extraordinary machinations are going on within the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers. If matters proceed as John Boyd and Terry Duffy seem to want them to, the union may be rather less amalgamated by the end of next week than it is now.

The four sections of the AUEW (Engineers, Foundry, Construction and white-collar TASS) have been moving, in theory at least, towards a closer unity ever since 1970. In 1974, a set of guiding principles for amalgamation (known as the 'Worthing proposals') was agreed by the combined Executives of the four. These have not yet been endorsed by the policy-making bodies of all the sections.

It has been apparent for some time (and was reported in the NS, 17 March 1978) that Boyd and Duffy, the right-wing leaders of the Engineering Section, want to keep out left-wing TASS and merge with Frank Chapple's

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union mergers . . . union splits . . .

politically more amenable EEPTU. Their latest plan is to by-pass the Worthing proposals – which aim to bring all four sections together at once – and merge the Foundry Section with the Engineers.

Next week, on 13 and 14 February, the Engineers' National Committee is being recalled to a special meeting. The details of the agenda have not been circulated to delegates, but it is believed that they will be asked to endorse an Executive Committee proposal that the Engineers' rule book be amended to accommodate the merger.

Boyd justifies this move by claiming that 'the only major obstacle' to full amalgamation has been TASS's refusal to agree that its existing full-time officials should be elected: 'This attitude of TASS left us with no alternative but to try to progress amalgamation by the three manual sections', he writes in the current issue of the Engineering Section's journal. Clearly, Boyd hopes Construction will follow Foundry (although so far it has refused to do so), leaving TASS entirely isolated. The way would then be clear to admit the EEPTU. Frank Chapple has made it known that he wants to join a union without separate industrial sections.

TASS might be forgiven for feeling a little persecuted. After all, it was established at Worthing that the white collar section should elect all *future* officials, not those already in post. Since then, TASS has agreed to elect even existing officials if, after full amalgamation, a rule-making conference of the whole union were to insist on it. The election issue has not been considered an obstacle to merging with the EEPTU, whose officials are appointed and are apparently intended to remain so. TASS is insisting on maintaining its own identity after amalgamation – another principle agreed at Worthing.

Before his retirement as AUEW President, Hugh Scanlon gave a guarantee that the Engineering Section, as well as the other sections, would be balloted for their final agreement on amalgamation. However, this latest move makes no provision for a ballot of the Engineers. Instead, Boyd is using the Instruments of Amalgamation established under the 1964 Trade Union (Amalgamations, etc) Act – which says that to accommodate a union which wishes to 'transfer engagements to' (i.e. become part of) another union, changes in the rules of the receiving union can be made by the 'governing body'. Boyd seems to be interpreting the latter phrase to mean the Executive Committee, although the exact definition is not clear.

It has been suggested that Boyd may try to use the same ploy again, if it works this time around. TASS, in particular, is worried that if its members eventually agree to full amalgamation, he may use the 'governing body' (i.e. the AUEW's Executive, which the Engineering Section would control by a wide margin of votes) to change the rules – either to impose retrospective election of officials or to abolish the separate identity of the sections. It has asked for an assurance that the Amalgamation Act will not be used again in this way; but an assurance has not been forthcoming.

The timing of next week's meeting is crucial to Boyd. A new National Committee, already elected, is due to take over shortly and its political complexion is less solidly right-wing. But if he and Duffy do get their way, what will become of TASS? Its Executive Committee has said it will wait until 'saner counsel prevails', but it must also have been considering other suitors. Both the Transport and General Workers' and the General and Municipal Workers' unions are known to be interested in picking up such a well-organised white-collar section, but their chances are apparently slim. A combination with ASTMS looks like a non-starter, too. There is, on the other hand, speculation that TASS may try teaming up with some of the smaller engineering craft unions.

PRIVACY

Facts and figures on phone tapping

Duncan Campbell writes: The closing last week of *Malone v. The Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis* has shed little light on the scope or control of official telephone tapping. Malone, a Surrey antique dealer, is seeking to stop the police tapping his phone. During an abortive trial on charges of handling stolen property, last July, prosecuting counsel admitted that his phone had been tapped 'on the authority of the Secretary of State's warrant'.

Whether, in fact, a Secretary of State has any such authority at all is the subject on which the High Court is now due to rule. There is no statutory power to tap telephones or carry out other similar invasions of privacy – as the Birkett Commission reported over 20 years ago. Successive governments have been advised simply to presume the power, and have, since Birkett, stonewalled every question put to it on the subject. Judge Sir Robert Megarry now has the power to rule that tapping is unlawful, allowing Malone, or anyone else in the same situation, at least to claim damages. Moreover, when practised by the British government, phone tapping may be in breach of the European convention on Human Rights, which prohibits 'secret surveillance' without adequate 'guarantees against abuse'. In a similar closely fought case before the European Court last year, West Germany only escaped conviction because it has independent parliamentary review bodies to check on tapping and warrants. No such bodies exist in Britain.

In last week's case, the authorities maintained their customary stony silence, reaffirming that Birkett's recommendations were still in force – refusing even to confirm or deny the earlier official admission that Malone's phone had been tapped. However, the scope and application of surveillance technology has changed drastically since Birkett's 1956 report. There is also plentiful evidence that information about private telephone calls is passed on in many other ways than by the officially authorised tapping of a phone. The most common of these techniques is the use of a 'printer meter' – which records on paper tape all the numbers dialled from a phone to which it is attached. Records can readily be searched to reveal the names of those called. Some 16,000 or more of these devices are now in use – the majority, admittedly, to check on disputed telephone bills. Soon to enter production is the 'Call Event Recorder', a new version of the printer meter which includes a sophisticated electronic circuit that could be used to analyse data. At least 20,000 are likely to be ordered.

The Post Office has always carried out an enormous programme of 'random' monitoring of calls, under a procedure known as 'service observation': 300,000 calls are monitored every week by 600 'observers' at various centres throughout Britain; around 10,000 of these are monitored from beginning to end. Originally, this procedure was amalgamated with telephone tapping; phone lines being tapped were included among a much larger number of lines being 'randomly' watched. The objects of 'service observation' are mainly technical – but information overheard can be passed to police or other authorities.

New types of equipment enable tapping to take place under cover of other activities. 'Call check' circuits have been introduced at all major British exchanges, allowing individual lines to be monitored at a distance of at least 50 miles. The Post Office have refused to identify the purpose of the equipment – but the specification, which we have seen, describes it as a 'tapping circuit'. At least two of these tapping circuits are routinely fitted to large exchanges. A new version of the 'call check' circuit allows the number intended for tapping to be dialled remotely by the eavesdropper, instead of connecting wires as at present. This is already being done on other equipment used for testing lines – notably by the army in Ulster.

SUCH SPECIAL FACILITIES for tapping telephones are often used by the large Post Office Investigation Department, who have access to all Post Office information and services without question. They can also bypass Post Office official procedures which are supposed to ensure customer confidentiality. The normal official instructions – contained in a document entitled 'Disclosure of Information about Telephone Calls', of which NEW STATESMAN has a copy – point out that the 1868 Telegraph Act prohibits staff from passing on information 'contrary to their duty'. But it then progressively widens their discretion – so that *in extremis*, local telephone managers apparently have the power to let police listen in on a phone line. The Post Office admit that their regulations 'appear to allow' such unauthorised tapping. But they claim that the only police requests for information, normally limited to the destination of calls only, were made through normal channels. There were 15 applications last year, with approval granted 6 times.

In fact, a vastly larger number of cases are handled directly by the POID, according to unofficial PO sources. The same impression is given in *Operation Julie*: the book about the well known police LSD investigation two years ago. The author, a former drugs squad inspector in charge of the operation, recounts how the POID readily attached printer meters and intercepted mail and parcels on their request, without formal permission. He also describes some seven telephone tapping cases, but only refers to obtaining an official warrant in three.

In one 'an organisation, which for security purposes cannot be named' laid on a tap bypassing the Scotland Yard procedure; in another three cases, an obliging Home Office official 'brushed aside the usual red tape'.

Such scanty evidence as is available points to at least 1,500 or more official tapping warrants a year – almost a tenfold growth since Birkett – and that of course does not include other methods used to get around normal procedures. MPs are not even allowed to table enquiries to the Home Office as to the numbers of warrants issued, let alone examine the use to which authorised and unauthorised tapping and other surveillance is put.

Malone's lawyers have dropped a damages claim in favour of a request for a simple declaration that British telephone tapping practices breach the right to privacy and respect for correspondence which are enshrined in the European Convention – and that Malone or others aggrieved should have a remedy. But that, according to Labour's Solicitor General, would be something 'quite inappropriate for a domestic court' to decide.

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London Diary

☐ I cannot contain my excitement over the Law Lords decision in the Colonel B case. Naming Colonel 'B' was not contempt of court! Marvellous. But where does that leave the naming of Lord Y and Mr Z in the historic case of *R v Socialist Worker and Foot* (1974)?

The facts in the case were as follows. Janie Jones was in the dock at the Old Bailey, charged with blackmail. The two chief witnesses against her were a peer of the realm (who insisted that all girls provided by Janie should convince him that they were under 14) and a property speculator who liked whipping.

The jury threw out the blackmail charges unanimously – a verdict which sent Mr Justice King-Hamilton into such a fury that he sentenced Janie to *seven years* on minor prostitution charges. I have never understood why women are punished for satisfying the lusts of anonymous men, so I printed the two men's names in a column I wrote in *Socialist Worker*.

All hell broke loose, as did Mr Samuel Silkin, Attorney General, who charged me with contempt of court in front of the Lord Chief Justice. The judge in Janie Jones' trial, he explained, had asked that the names be not published. But did that request have legal authority? The judge himself clearly thought not. He had said: 'I have no jurisdiction over the Press'.

Lord Chief Justice Widgery disagreed. He begged the Attorney General to find 'a single case' where the courts had upheld the right of judges to order journalists not to publish witnesses' names. No, poor old Sam couldn't find any such case, or any such power. So Lord Widgery made it up. He said that my naming the men was 'flouting the authority of the court'. He was instantly supported by his two colleagues, one of whom was Mr Justice Ackner, the man who knows the difference between the rule of law (ineffective picketing) and anarchy (effective picketing).

Socialist Worker and I were fined £500 each, and we had to pay costs of some £5,000.

Two Law Lords in the Colonel B case – Dilhorne and Scarman – thought that my case was 'rightly decided'. Two others – Russell and Diplock – didn't say anything about it. Lord Edmund Davies, who is not a member of the Socialist Workers Party, said:

> I have to say respectfully that I am uneasy about the view expressed by Lord Widgery that 'the deliberate flouting of the court's intention' is sufficient to constitute criminal contempt . . . I should add that I am for a like reason not wholly satisfied about the *ratio decidendi* of the Divisional Court in *R v Socialist Worker*.

I assume that Mr Silkin will now recognise that my conviction is, at the very least, suspect. I am not a vindictive man. A free pardon and a cheque for £5,000 made out to the Socialist Workers Party will satisfy me.

But should I again name Lord Y and Mr Z? I am taking legal advice. This could take several months, which delay, I hope, will cause the maximum possible anguish to the peer in question, who ratted on Janie Jones to save his patrician skin. This person I should add, is not unrelated to someone to whom, in the interests of privacy, I shall refer simply as Elizabeth R.

☐ Reading the Peachey Report, I am haunted by a postcard which was on sale, I think, sometime in the late 1960s. It shows the country's three political leaders standing solemnly together on an Armistice parade: E. Heath, H. Wilson and J. Thorpe.

What bad luck these three have had with capitalists who have gone bust on them! Edward Heath, for instance, was entirely blameless in the collapse of Slater Walker. His investments were shares in one of Jim Slater's more notorious 'incentivising' outfits, Tokengate Investments. But Heath knew nothing about Tokengate, or the machinations of its master, Slater, who was twice a dinner guest at Downing Street when Heath was Prime Minister. Equally, Harold Wilson is entirely blameless, as the report makes clear, in the Peachey business. He did not know that £3,000 worth of champagne was being bought for him by Miller in March 1976, so why shouldn't he make Miller a knight two months later? Jeremy Thorpe, what's more, as another Board of Trade Report insists, was absolutely blameless in the collapse of London and County Securities.

The British government is trying to extradite L&C's founder, Gerald Caplan, from America on charges of stealing £2m, but Jeremy Thorpe was only a director of the company, and he knew nothing whatever about that. I see, incidentally, that nine directors and executives of London and County are up on various charges at Bow Street on 23 April. One of the few former directors who will not be there is Jeremy Thorpe. This is perhaps fortunate for the administration of justice, since Mr Thorpe is wanted at the Old Bailey at almost exactly the same time on charges the nature of which for the moment escape me.

☐ Looking for an example of what Sir Geoffrey Howe meant on Sunday when he complained that 'the balance of power in pay bargaining has tipped dramatically away from management towards the unions', I came across the latest figures for Trust Houses Forte, the hotel group. They are fantastic. Profits are up 46 per cent to £55m; and dividends up a sacrificial 29 per cent to £10.7m.

I remember some very cold days indeed secondary picketing outside the Grosvenor House Hotel, Sheffield, in December 1976, and again outside the Night Out Club in central Birmingham in early 1977, in which people who work for Trust Houses Forte were on strike for the right to join a union. Mainly women workers, they were, and immigrant workers. Gentle, hard-working people overcome with indignation at their unimaginably low wages.

They were broken to pieces. Many strikers were sacked. Today, their wages are still 'negotiated' for them by Wages Councils which are bound to the government pay norm.

The truth is that without trade unions the workers at Trust Houses Forte have slipped down the wages league, while the profits of their employers (chiefly garnered from 'competitive enterprise' such as the monopoly franchise for running all catering at London Airport) have risen astronomically. There are, in short, *two* Trust Houses Fortes, the people who profit from it, and the people who work for it. Just as there are, in exactly the same way, two nations.

☐ I have been scanning the papers for more news of a Labour Party member whose desperate poverty is a running sore on the body politic. Early in January, Lord Harris of Greenwich was forced to resign his post as Minister of State at the Home Office.

The *Daily Mail* (4 Jan.) explained: 'Lord Harris has made it known that he has resigned for more money.' The *Daily Mirror* of the same date rammed the point home: 'Friends believe that one of the personal reasons why he resigned was to give him an opportunity to increase his salary.'

No wonder. Lord Harris in his senior position of state was earning a miserable £9,000 a year; the sort of money which an ambulanceman might notch up in a mere four years.

Can nothing be done by humanitarians in the City to help this man? His situation is so pathetic that he is reduced to writing articles in the *Daily Telegraph* attacking the 'denigration of the police' on the BBC!

There is a lot to be said for him. He represents the sort of loyalty to the right wing of British social democracy of which Reg Prentice would be proud. When he worked for the *Economist* in the early 1970s, no one there could distinguish his views from those of its Tory editor, Alastair Burnet. And he is, after all, exceedingly resourceful. At the Home Office, he was responsible for prisons, and for the appointment of the chairman of the Parole Board. Suddenly, he *was* chairman of the Parole Board. Perhaps he appointed himself.

People in Whitehall used to assume that it takes two to Quango. Lord Harris has proved that you can play the game all by yourself.

Paul Foot

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ Saluting has been banned at the army resettlement centre in Aldershot, where servicemen of all ranks learn new skills for civilian life. A general lost control of his wheelbarrow returning a salute. – *Guardian* (J. Wyatt).

☐ The council of the University gratefully acknowledges the following gifts, grants and benefactions: from the Association for Science Education to Mr R. A. Hull, School of Education, an amount not yet known for Decision Making in Science Education. – *University of Nottingham Gazette* (P. Main)

☐ After the state visit, the family will fly to the Pacific island of Tonga. Sun and relaxation is just what the Duke needs. For he flew back to London last night bruised and shaken after a ski fall in Switzerland. – *Evening News* (Chris Pinney).

☐ I would put first on the list the sloppy sentimental politicians who have outlawed the use of the 'cat'. At the time of Culloden 500 strokes of the cat were quite common in the Duke of Cumberland's army for such offences as looting. We pay a heavy price for departing from Christian standards. – Letter in *Edinburgh Evening News* (S. C. Norman).

☐ Some 220 delegates attended the conference in Blackpool yesterday of the Citizens' Crusade Against Violence, the latest campaign to bring back physical punishment. – *Guardian* (J. Polson).

☐ The hunt meet and the fox both came to a sudden end when somebody shot it. The master of the hunt, farmer John Collinson, of Whitby Laithes, Hawkser, said: 'It was a very unsportsmanlike thing to do, an action no hunting person can possibly approve of.' – *Middlesbrough Evening Gazette* (Leo Frain).

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LETTERS to the EDITOR

The greedier media

Sir, I read your splendid issue of 26 January. If I thought you would publish one like it with every issue, I would become a regular reader. Keep it up.

I particularly appreciated Anna Coote's fine article on the gross lies propagated by the media about the strike of lorry-drivers. It is not as if they were ignorant about what was going on. I had sent most of them letters explaining the dispute from the point of view of a lorry-driver. Alas! These public-school types in the employ of the media seem to be prepared to do a hatchet-job on strikers for mere pelf, and the upward social mobility that goes with it. Even the usually objective *Economist* became all emotive on the subject.

The press bleat away about their entitlement to free speech. Like the average believer in democracy, I accept a free press as being a good thing. However, freedom without responsibility tends to allow some degeneration into licence. In my opinion this is what has happened in the present spate of biased reporting of the activities of my fellow lorry-drivers on strike.

If the press will not give us fair comment, let us call on our fellow trade-unionists to withdraw their labour from publishing these savage attacks upon us by shutting them down through a protest strike. It is time these pip-squeak, public-school journalists and hatchet-men editors, with their £8,000–£12,000 per year salaries were given a lesson. They have expectorated upon lorry-drivers like myself once too often.

H. C. MULLIN
(HGV Class 1 driver)

970 Maryhill Road
Glasgow

Getting at gays

Sir, I know the NS has a pretty tepid record as far as supporting gay rights is concerned, but I really think you should try to discourage David Harsent who, in his review of *Anchorman* (NS 19 January), described one of the characters as a 'faggot'. As he seems to be able to manage without terms like 'nigger', 'chink', 'yid' etc., I think he could extend a similar courtesy to homosexuals.

MARK LILLY

70 Glendower Crescent
Orpington, Kent

Death in Cambodia

Sir, I found Christopher Hitchens's trite comments (NS 5 January) on the death of Dr Malcolm Caldwell in Democratic Kampuchea (Cambodia) very distasteful. Surely the point about Dr Caldwell, which even Christopher Hitchens mentions, is that he was a committed and hard-working supporter of liberation movements in South East Asia and elsewhere even when the cause was controversial and the interest by others slight.

Had Christopher Hitchens bothered to find out what happened during Dr Caldwell's visit to Kampuchea, as Nayan Chanda of the *Far East Economic Review* had done, he might have discovered that Dr Caldwell did indeed express disquiet to his Kampuchean hosts about several matters. Personally I think Dr Caldwell should have expressed some of this disquiet here as well. But, I wonder, does his failure to do so really deserve the much abused label of 'Stalinist' as a fitting epitaph? It is a pity that his article on Stalinism which appeared in *Tribune* (24 March 1978) has been ignored in making this ridiculous charge.

I should also like to mention that Dr Caldwell, unlike so many of those who are interested in building socialism everywhere but Britain, was an active member of his local Labour Party.

STEVE VINES

Flat 2
44 Highbury Place
London N5

Ceylon's happy Tamils

Sir, I refer to the article about my country by Mr. C. Hitchens (19 January), in which he declines even to use the country's correct name.

The author derides Third World countries in general and Sri Lanka in particular, without any mention of the underlying causes of underdevelopment or any reference to the fundamental aspects of contemporary international affairs. His arrogant bias is nowhere more evident than in his contemptuous disparagement of the Sacred Buddha Tooth Relic, which is venerated by hundreds of millions of Buddhists who would doubtless be very offended by his remarks. His subjective opinions, however offensive, could have been ignored, but he has sought to lend verisimilitude to an otherwise prejudiced and mischievous narrative by adducing facts so incorrect as to demand rebuttal.

He deplores the release only now of political detainees from the 1971 armed insurgency. Presumably he would advocate for Britain also that armed insurgents who seek to destroy its democratic structure and to overthrow its elected government should not be detained except briefly? And, military expenditure in Sri Lanka has always been under 10 per cent, in comparison with social welfare expenditure of over 30 per cent.

Indian Tamil labour on Sri Lanka's tea estates enjoys the franchise, and their elected leader is a Cabinet Minister in the present Government. He and his Party, the CWC, have publicly repudiated the separatist policy of the Sri Lankan Tamil TULF.

The predominantly Sri Lankan Tamil area, the Jaffna Peninsula, was unaffected by the cyclone. The most severely devastated parts were the Batticaloa, Amparai and Polonnaruwa districts, which have very large concentrations of Sinhalese and Moors, besides the Tamils who also live there.

The TULF, which calls for separation, claims a mandate in two provinces: the North and the East. At the last general elections, it received only 31 per cent of the vote in the Eastern Province, which returned twice as many UNP Government MPs as TULF MPs. Even in the Northern province, 31 per cent of the Tamils voted against the TULF. And only 52.4 per cent of all Sri Lankan Tamils live in that province.

N. WIMALASENA
High Commissioner

Sri Lanka (Ceylon) High Commission
13 Hyde Park Gardens
London W2

Workers as serfs

Sir, The excellent article by Lord Wedderburn on trade union rights (NS 26 January) in fact understates the situation. In the *Daily Express*/NUJ case which he cites, the management opened the attack by seeking to claim that we were in breach of our Contracts of Employment in refusing to handle Press Association copy produced by blacklegs. It was only later that they sought to obtain an injunction on the different grounds that the action was not in furtherance of a trade dispute. According to the legal advice that I have been given, any management can dismiss all its staff if they engage in any industrial action, up to and including strikes, which can be construed as a breach of contract. There is no legal redress for the dismissed workers, unless the dismissals are selective and then an action can be initiated on grounds of victimisation.

This means that in Britain today, after some 17 years of postwar Labour Governments, with Press and radio and television largely united in claiming that the unions are running the country, strikes are illegal in the sense that strikers can be sacked. This surely puts us among the most unenlightened countries. We are, literally, contract labour, scarcely better off than serfs.

DAVID ROSS
Father of NUJ Chapel

Daily Express
Fleet Street
London EC4

We apologise for the disruption in regular services. Arthur Marshall has been delayed unavoidably and Roger Woddis is on p.194. They will be back together again next week.

Mighty medics

Sir, Your excellent analysis of The Death of a Social Contract (NS 26 January) failed to mention the one union who, with the connivance of at least one Cabinet minister, managed to get a 28 per cent pay rise as well as charging 'what the market will bear' from private fees. I refer, of course, to the medical profession. Not content with having a legal monopoly, some members of the fraternity now feel it in order not only to criticise less fortunate members of the community (who do not have one foot firmly planted in Whitehall) when they pursue their legitimate rights, but also to refuse innocent patients their services.

What is even more frightening, however, is the amount of power some members of the BMA have to dictate policy at the DHSS and on Regional Health Authorities and Area Health Authorities where medical 'experts' wedded to expensive technological specialities are over-represented.

It is interesting that the services to be closed in inner city areas are in run-down working class areas – with many elderly unemployed and immigrants (e.g. Bethnal Green and Plumstead). I suspect that these units are closed not because of economic unviability or poor buildings – many being in much better condition than the teaching Mecca's – but because the clientele offer little scope for private medicine. Some of the medical fraternity have done very nicely out of public expenditure cuts – reducing the supply but not the demand for beds. I could almost give my vote to a Mrs T. prepared to curb the power of the overmighty medics.

PAULINE TURNER

'Loch Nigg'
263 Brampton Road
Bexleyheath, Kent

Blood and guts

Sir, Yes, *Gross Intrusion* (NS 26 January) is a raging steaming beast of a book. It is passion, guts, blood, spunk (both kinds) and shit. It is an upheaval from the pits of the earth and like my play *East* it disturbs as well as thrills depending on the storehouse of repression you have lined your senses with. Bernard Levin, theatre critic, used, like your reviewer, amazingly similar snide pejoratives about my play *East* – a play which packed audiences all over the world. Levin called it the most revolting evening he had ever spent in the theatre, while singing the praises of innocuous and faceless bourgeois drama. Likewise, your fiction critic finds remarkable the previous book in his review, whose character believes she has spirits in her oak tree.

Gross Intrusion, like *East,* contains a magic ingredient called life force. It is here to stay and will always shock those who cannot bear to have exposed the birth and foetal mess of creation but are in love with death and dead themes. While a revolutionary artist like myself – as playwright, actor, theatre director and now prose writer – has rarely had the understanding of the middle of the road, I would still expect the decency of a review. Your man didn't review it. He spat at it like a frightened cat. He was as vicious as I have known anyone to be in my life. His horrified over-reaction to my book suggests, among other things, that he prefers little spirits in trees to full-grown ogres.

STEVE BERKOFF

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

Russell Davies

The Totem of Waste

Delmore Schwartz by JAMES ATLAS *Faber/ Farrar, Straus & Giroux* £8.25
What Is To Be Given by DELMORE SCHWARTZ *Carcanet* £2.90

> For all his love of heroes, Delmore was more interested in their failings than in what had made them great. He had what could be called a democratic imagination, in that it reduced all men to the same condition of anxiety and nameless discontent.

And in this, Delmore Schwartz's biographer might further have claimed, the poet was half a step ahead of his time. His 'democratic imagination' was not quite a novelty, of course, but neither had it yet become general as the conditioning faculty of modern Western art. Today it has taken over in just that way, and the psychologising scepticism that is its natural, corrosive mode of revaluation applies itself busily to all the great popular heroes of past and present, making shiftless neuros and dangerous weaklings of them all. But at the same time, it has the power, this democratic imagination, belatedly to promote to the front rank of our esteem certain rediscovered figures who, it now seems, suffered in advance some of our fashionable woes – and this is what has happened to Delmore Schwartz himself. America's partial revolt against its own aristocracy of success has seen him 'taken up': 13 years after his death, he is well on the way to becoming a Great and Representative Failure, a Totem of Waste.

He was preceded in this role by another bright boy of the Thirties, a fellow-prodigy. They were quaintly hailed, together, in 1949, by a schoolmasterly Conrad Aiken: 'The two most completely satisfactory poets of the moment,' he wrote, '. . . are Mr Dylan Thomas and Mr Delmore Schwartz.' Treacherous hindsight makes a curse out of Aiken's acclaim. This was the top of the slope for both Mr Thomas and Mr Schwartz. Neither would be mistaken for a completely satisfactory poet very much longer; and by the time they met, about ten years later at a lionising function for Thomas in a New York loft, neither was in any condition to compare notes on the downward slide. The world was just too much awash with unsatisfactoriness. What is certainly true, however, is that Schwartz was in much the more interesting kind of bad shape.

Schwartz was passing, at this stage, through a period when his normally super-sociable instincts seemed paralysed; they were never fully liberated again, except by madness and alcohol and the occasional audience of outraged and delighted boys and girls. It was a rare enthusiast or friend who made a real investment in the declining Schwartz's company. Those who did had grim but memorable returns: a late photograph taken in Washington Square Park (by the astute Rollie McKenna, compiler of a celebrated valedictory photographic portfolio on Dylan Thomas) shows Schwartz tensed morosely on a bench and wearing his old sack of a suit. His broad, bruised, Slavic features, darkened and chilled by his paranoid sidelong glare into the middle distance, give him a hunted air that even Peter Lorre, the obvious casting, would have been hard pressed to reproduce.

Not many people in the park that day, I suppose, would have cared to distinguish between Schwartz's failure and the normal run of downfalls ascribable to incompetence, over-reaching, delusion. And indeed, Schwartz's career, viewed as a public matter, does invite one towards the swift conclusion that he was simply unable to cope. The outstanding early success of his first volume, *In Dreams Begin Responsibilities* (1938), was followed only a year or so later by the ignominy of his translation of Rimbaud's *Une Saison en Enfer*, where Schwartz's dreamlike irresponsibility to the text (or what the man-in-the-park would call, and rightly, his poor command of French) was the off-colour keynote. Then his autobiographical verse epic *Genesis* (1943), a giant labour, brought forth not with roars but squeaks. 'Genesis,' he noted in his journal, '– all eggs/one basket.'

In a sense, he spent the rest of his life simply making the basket bigger. Niagaroid verse diaries took over the continuing story of his world-historical Self. He began to disappear among his own intricate reinterpretations of his own identity. (We have a rude, rectal phrase for this in England, and it is not out of place.) Two marriages disappeared too, though not without leaving their trace on Schwartz's mind. Finally, having added drink to his upping-and-downing pill problem – he was a lifelong insomniac, and never stopped trying to tamper with his levels of waking alertness – he lost his reason, while retaining the use and over-use of a whirring brain. He continued to invent, but his metaphors had grown bigger than the world Schwartz lived in. Something in him insisted that his personal affairs be shifted into an epic scale. In his mind he became the central figure in an American espionage drama as boundless as invention – and invention mothered by psychotic necessity. With what a fearful delusional insistence Schwartz engraved in his diary in 1964 the words:

> It is now seven years to the day since my wife, Elizabeth Pollet, left me suddenly at the Hotel St George in Brooklyn. The man for whom she left me – after many preparations over a period of two years designed to conceal the real motives of her actions was *Nelson Rockefeller*.

This particular fantasy was a stayer. The last of his girlfriends, another Elizabeth, left Schwartz when he accused her of being Rockefeller's spy. 'He never spoke to her again', James Atlas reports, 'and when she left a Christmas tree outside his door as a gesture of reconciliation, he doused it in the bathtub, convinced the tree was wired with explosives.' There was quite as much imagery in Schwartz's life as in his work. In his more reckless gestures and remarks, indeed, there was sometimes a more satisfying finality than ever he attained in his writings.

But the word 'attain' raises expectations which are perhaps not altogether appropriate here; for Schwartz's work, what has been made available of it here, gives no impression of wholehearted striving. The effort behind his utterances is an impulse not so much towards communication as towards compromise: the words are suspended in a truce-like state between fearless honesty of import and feared inauthenticity of source. In other words, Schwartz, though unambiguous of speech, is never happy about who is speaking, even though it is always himself – perhaps I should say *particularly* as it is always himself. No writer so rampantly autobiographical can ever have had so much trouble wrapping up the egotistical 'I'. Being an artist rather than a columnist, he naturally resorted to aliases. But such was his almost ideological hatred of his own given name that they all turned out parodistically sappy: Cornelius Schmidt, Hershey Green (the issue of 'Genesis'), and, recurringly, Shenandoah Fish – a name in which the parental desire to implant themselves in the New World is ridiculed to a poisonously bitter degree.

This business of names is no mere neurotic mannerism on Schwartz's part, but the clue to an inner defeat discoverable even at the heart of his 1938 success. For once, the old Leavisite charge that an author is 'against life' can almost be made to stick. In the title story of that early volume (the rest of which, confusingly, is verse), Schwartz, in the first person, fancies himself to be at a cinema watching a silent film of his parents' courtship rituals. Eventually he rises from his seat in anguish and shouts at the screen, 'don't do it. It's not too late to change your minds, both of you. Nothing good will come of it . . .' After a further outburst he is ejected by an usher, who catechises him on the way: 'Don't you know that you can't do whatever you want to do? . . . You will be sorry if you do not do what you should do . . .' And Schwartz wakes 'into the bleak winter morning of my 21st birthday'. One gets no feeling – one hardly could – from such unupholstered prose, that Schwartz is in any way casually playing with these ideas. The tone may be Kafka, but the furious double sense of trappedness, within both genetic/social and moral/historical systems, belongs entirely to Schwartz. Sure enough, he finally belonged entirely to it.

What really went begging in this unfortunate man was his sense of the sublime. He could nourish it in his learning, and exercise it in teaching, conversation and criticism for the benefit of others. Yet until his horribly ironic latter-day period of useless manic possession, he was never himself upraised by any conviction of exalted worth. On the contrary. His most famous poem 'The Heavy Bear Who Goes With Me' hardly requires its subtitle 'the withness of the body': nor does one need to emphasise that along with the body, in the poem's disgusted last line 'the scrimmage of appetite everywhere' go sex, money, status and the rest of the Freudian package. The business of living dragged him down. It had soiled his hopes at birth. The conviction that there were others who were clean made Schwartz ultimately a victim of self-pity. It left him no revenge on the world. Or is the revenge of the self-pitying, just possibly, the so-called 'democratic imagination'? If so, Schwartz turned its reductive powers first on himself.

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Frank Kermode

Once-Overs

The Abomination of Moab by ROBERT CONQUEST *Temple Smith* £7.95

Robert Conquest is a writer of exceptionally various achievements: if the first that come to mind are his horrified, meticulous researches into Russian terror and his work on Russian literature, there are others, apparently unrelated, that follow quickly after. He is a poet, he was the manifesto-writer of the Fifties 'Movement'; he is an acknowledged expert on science fiction and limericks; he is a journalist and a wit. This collection is not about the Russians, but it touches on most of his other interests: poetry, pornography, translation, SF and criticism.

I happen to like such miscellanies, even if they have fallen out of fashion. This one, though it could hardly not provide pleasure – the odd contours of Conquest's mind guarantee it – has more obvious faults than most. Some of the pieces are too slight and undeveloped to be worth reprinting; the longest of all, 'A Note on Kipling's Verse', is only about 20 pages, and the briefest rarely say anything that can't be found elsewhere in the book, which tends to be repetitive. I suppose we can blame the publisher for the misprints: to mention but two, 'Krafft-Ebbing' shows that a name has been lost in a joke; 'irridescent' is a most unseemly capitulation to the young, who seem to have decided to spell it thus. Somebody must take the blame for a worse fault, the failure to date the pieces. The essay on Charles Williams, perhaps the best in the book, should be read as belonging to an almost forgotten period when what Empson used to call 'Neo-Christianity' was looking like a threat; it exemplifies Conquest's unflagging alertness to all forms of totalitarianism, maintained over many years. But it's not so much that we want to study his career, just that when he writes 'last year' or the like, we want to know when that was.

The pleasure comes from our apprehension of a unified personality; variously learned though he be, Conquest is remarkably all of a piece. It is in his capacity as a skilled metrist that he both restores Housman fragments (the second such restoration is probably the best poem in the book) and places a high value on Kipling or a low one on Pound. It is in his capacity as an unillusioned *littérateur*, at home in the great works of heaven knows how many languages, that he biffs his enemies. He calls them 'Moabites'; the threat is no longer from the Philistines, but from the large party which affects a love for literature, cultivates phony sages ('Poundism and Lawrencery'), worships 'low seriousness', for the most part works in the universities, feels obliged to invent critical methods that look rigorous, and inflates the reputations of poets who have small merit beyond the apparent obscurity and novelty of their procedures.

Biffing is fun, but it gets tedious with repetition, and Conquest seems incapable of discussing anything whatever without turning aside to snap and swipe. Early on he says he's tempted to compile what he calls a *Corpus Errorum Criticastorum* and nail the wretches once and for all; but here his imagination and learning, as well as his polemical skills, seem to fail. He is simply being rude to people who don't share his views, represented as unquestionable. And when he does mention academic critics by name he is usually respectful, so that one suspects the enemy to be largely chimerical.

It's not just that it would be easy to be much ruder and more specific than he is; the trouble seems to be a real defect of imagination. Conquest is superlatively, and for some tastes no doubt tediously, well informed about SF. He cannot understand why other people simply don't care for it, and he speaks of it with unwonted solemnity, sounding at moments like a Moabite on Pound. SF breaks with convention: 'to take literary conventions for granted and when they are broken to retort hotly that anything outside them is "not literature" is a piece of unthinking automatism.' Yes; but this dictum is applied only to SF. If critics indifferent to SF are guilty of a want of imagination, why cannot the same be said of Conquest, who over and over again dismisses literature he doesn't like as outside the conventions, as 'not literature'?

Pound, it seems, is the paradigm case of 'false taste'. 'I should rank early, Provence-fixated Pound – his best period – as on a level with, and perhaps even slightly superior to, Richard le Gallienne.' Conquest, who nearly always has something interesting to say about translation, is especially rough on *Homage to Sextus Propertius*, an easy target if you approach it already armed with contemptuous hostility. But there are arguments on the other side: J. P. Sullivan, who knows even more about Propertius than Conquest, stated them 14 years ago, and he at least deserved refutation. It seems that the trouble of finding out exactly what the other side is saying is not something Conquest is keen on taking, and this reluctance may also explain some astonishingly weak *obiter dicta* on Henry James and Wallace Stevens. These writers call for rather more than the cursory once-over that persuades Conquest of his right to call the first a 'self-indulgent old bore' and to assert that the second is lacking in 'adequate rhythmic sense'. They need the sort of attention Moabites are urged to give *Astounding Stories*.

A learned discourse on limericks, a spoof piece on *Lucky Jim* and another on *Lady Chatterley's Lover* enliven the volume, as do some sprightly pieces on pornography. 'What we should adopt is the habit of recognising, not the sexual but the censoring tendency in ourselves or others as one to be indulged as little as possible.' Rather sadly, though, Conquest withdraws from this position, and now thinks it wrong to say that 'pornography cannot harm us', concluding, rather twistedly, that the excesses of the censors cannot be held to justify those of the 'pornosophers'. The note in which this involved retraction is made occupies a page and a half, which again leaves the whole topic in a very unsatisfactory state. But the charm of the book, which is greater than these quibblings allow me to suggest, lies partly in that incompleteness; it is mostly growls and asides about what the world and literature are coming to, and nothing is worked out in detail because Robert Conquest thinks that what is self-evident to him should be so to all non-Moabites – and non-Moabites, again self-evidently, is what we should all prefer to be.

About Oxford books

'Kolakowski's work is critical but scrupulously fair and brilliantly empathetic (in a way that Popper's "The Open Society and its Enemies" was not). Marxists and non-Marxists alike must now find this the standard general history of the origins and the forms of Marxist doctrine.' Bernard Crick in *The Observer*

Main Currents of Marxism

When Leszek Kolakowski's massive three-volume history of Marxism was published last November, it was immediately acclaimed. Writing in *The Guardian*, Alan Ryan said: 'Readers of Kolakowski's previous books would expect a great deal of what they will find here. What they could hardly expect from anyone is this sustained lucidity and accuracy in the treatment of a vast body of material. The title of these three volumes altogether underestimates the richness of their contents.'

The three books – **The Founders;** £7.95, **The Golden Age,** £8.50; and **The Breakdown,** £8.50 – delineate the development of Marx's own thought and the contributions of his best-known followers. What is so unusual about them is the combination of their philosophical depth with their usefulness, their reliability, as the handbooks their author intended them to be. George Steiner commented on this in the *Sunday Times,* saying that 'this compendious *summa* will be of use and stimulus even to those who seek to consult one or another aspect of the vast topic'.

The depth of Kolakowski's understanding, the firmness of his grasp of his materials, has led critics like Leopold Labedz to judge his work by the highest standards; to say that it is 'the product of a brilliant and mature mind reflecting deeply on the human condition'.

Bernard Crick is surely right: **Main Currents of Marxism** must now be regarded as the standard work in its field. 'Kolakowski', he said, in the review which appeared last month, 'writes not merely with a truly continental perspective, but has a coherent world view of almost Hegelian stature. His three volumes are a great intellectual achievement, real critical history. No writer in English has such scope, depth, and intimate knowledge as Kolakowski . . . No short review can do justice to the book nor catch the rare mixture of trustworthy description and yet firm criticism.'

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Christopher Hill

Zounds Bad

Swearing and Perjury in Shakespeare's Plays by FRANCES A. SHIRLEY *Allen & Unwin* £8.50

What's in Shakespeare's Names by MURRAY J. LEVITH *Allen & Unwin* £8.50

The mini-monograph appears to be in favour with publishers these days. It no doubt enables some young academics to get their theses published in a difficult world; and this is to be welcomed. But, selling at six or seven pence a page, the form calls for a paring-down to essentials, or apparent essentials, which may be as unhealthy for authors as the opposite situation of 20 years ago when publishers believed that they could sell any egg-head book.

The two works under review illustrate some of the problems. Professor Shirley, who already has a couple of books to her credit, claims to have discovered an aspect of Shakespeare's plays which 'no one seems to have examined'. This is perhaps a surprising claim, since the importance of perjury and forswearing in the history plays has long been recognised. What Professor Shirley appears to mean is that no one has gone through the plays act by act, scene by scene, pausing every time there is an oath, a vow or an expletive. This she does exhaustively. Whether it brings illumination to the close study of the text must be decided by more learned Shakespeare scholars. It does not help the general reader much.

A chapter on the historical background leads to the not very startling conclusion that 'people were vitally concerned about swearing during Shakespeare's lifetime'. But what sort of swearing? Professor Shirley does not distinguish between an oath and an expletive. She grades oaths from the mild 'i'faith' to the powerful 'Zounds', but in each case she assumes that the speaker is solemnly swearing, whether by his faith or by God's wounds. This may be the case, though surely it needs arguing, for it affects the balance of her argument. She notes, for instance, that *Macbeth* 'is almost barren of oaths despite the sincerity of the Scots'. Falstaff would score top marks for sincerity on that assumption.

The only play about which Professor Shirley has anything of much general interest to say is *Othello*. She argues that Iago, free with his oaths when inciting Roderigo against Othello, is much more careful in conversation with Cassio and Othello; and that the Moor's mounting passion can be measured as he 'is raised to stronger and stronger language'. His final 'Zounds!' when he thinks Desdemona is equivocating about her handkerchief 'exhibits in one explosion the peak of pressure to which his anger and exasperation have risen'. This 'response to pleas from a woman to whom he would have denied nothing only a few hours before shows that indeed "chaos is come again"'. Whether this tells us anything about the play that we did not know already is another matter.

Professor Shirley is interesting, if not original, on the censorship. She devotes a chapter to the effects on playwriting of the 1606 act against blasphemy. Where Quartos had been published before this act, we can see its effects in the First Folio. 'By heaven' becomes 'alas', 'by the mass' becomes 'in troth', and 'Zounds' is bowdlerised to 'away!'. In plays first published after 1606, or for which no Quarto survives, we have to guess. Professor Shirley praises the skill with which Shakespeare adapted himself to the new demands of the censor, though noting that a high proportion of his later plays sidestep the problem because their setting is pre-Christian. It is so gratifying to read a literary critic who recognises that the words only get on to the page because they are written by a real person living in a real world that perhaps I overestimate the importance of this contribution.

Professor Levith does a trot through all Shakespeare's plays, considering the name of every character and some locations. He recognises that a large number of Shakespeare's names were given to him by history or his sources, but this does not stop him telling us that 'Venice is presented as harsh and mercantile, and its name suggests the *veneer* of a superficial city, *venal* in its thrust and *venereal* in its disease'. He regards it as relevant to the name of Antonio in *The Merchant of Venice* that relics of St Anthony 'are in Vienne in France, a place name remarkably like Venice'. In *Hamlet*, 'Polonius too is apt. It suggests the politic nature of the counsellor, and with its echo reminds that the Polish question is a background for the action.' 'In Ophelia we hear also *ophis*, "serpent", explaining not her evil but the taint of circumstance.' 'We read "demon" in the middle of Desdemona's name. In Othello's we read "hell".' In *Pericles* 'Thaliard's name contains in it the English word *liar* suggestive of his negative character. (The Greek Thalia, however, was the "muse of blossoming happiness".)' The 'ia' in Bianca, Iago and Jachimo recalls to the sensitive ear of Professor Levith 'the same phoneme in Machiavelli', 'a name synonymous with Italian evildoing for Renaissance Englishmen'.

If it is true, as they tell us, that contemporary American pronunciation is closer to Shakespeare's English than contemporary English is, then perhaps we can swallow Bottom as 'a pun on *ass*, an association reinforced by the visual image of Bottom's head'. But I wonder about 'Olivia comes close to "I love you"', even 'when spoken rapidly aloud'. I have doubts too about the tentative suggestion that in the title *Macbeth* ('son of Beth') 'Shakespeare is making a point about would-be "sons of Beth" – followers of the late Queen Elizabeth – and usurpation'.

Obviously the names of some of Shakespeare's lesser comic characters convey a point: Starveling, Pistol, Sir Toby Belch. But it does not follow from this that every name conceals a secret which can be tortured out of it. When Ruskin made a considerably less ambitious and thorough attempt to interpret Shakespeare's names, Matthew Arnold exploded: 'Now really, what a piece of extravagance all that is!' 'Provincial' was Arnold's word for it. How would he have characterised Professor Levith's theory that the name Falstaff was a play on Shakespeare's own surname – 'Shake-speare, Fal-staff – a shaking spear transmogrified into a falling staff'? Professor Levith devotes half of his concluding chapter to this brainwave. The evidence for it is that Shakespeare's grandfather was once referred to in a manorial document as 'Shakstaff', that Shakespeare 'very probably' was fat, and that in an engraving printed nearly 50 years after the poet's death a character labelled Falstaff 'looks *exactly* like the monument bust of William Shakespeare in Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon'. 'Zounds!' seems the only possible comment. It is, Professor Shirley tells us, 'the strongest phrase available'.

Anthony Thwaite

Not Solemn

At the Pillars of Hercules by CLIVE JAMES *Faber* £7.95

Though I have what I shall judiciously call a certain respect for the critical *oeuvre* of Raymond Williams, I have no memory of coming across a joke in it. I could say the same of Northrop Frye, W. K. Wimsatt, Harold Bloom or Roland Barthes, to name but a few – strenuous literary critics, all of them, with large reputations in the global territories of the Seminar. Not that I go to literary criticism to get a few laughs, though Empson can – intentionally – make me grin and Eliot has sometimes made a faint rictus pass across one cheek. But it's rare (isn't it? One must remember, with Leavis, that literary criticism is a 'collaborative exercise') to find a man smiling in those great expanses of exegetical and value-ridden tundra. Those who can have such an effect on me are, when I list their names, an odd set: Dr Johnson, Matthew Arnold, Edmund Wilson, Christopher Ricks – and, for the past few years, Clive James.

Well now: 'He has had the usual trouble of writers who are not solemn, in that the humourless have been slow to take him seriously.' This is Clive James on Gore Vidal, but the message is taken – James knows what the solemn and humourless have been saying about him and publishing about him, and it's a relief for him to be able to foist off the charges by bringing in Vidal. An Australian, and therefore conscious that the old world is hardly going to think of Culture as being his birthright, James makes it his business to know more than the effete folk among whom he now lives, and to *show* that he knows more; but 'Not Solemn' is the Excelsior on his banner.

Not that learning lightly worn is the whole of the James formula. He is as much of a hero-worshipper as any Victorian sage, and his enthusiasm tends to be not just infectious but virulent. One can indeed picture the occasion he saw Auden by chance making the same Cambridge-to-London journey: 'When the train pulled in I waited for him at the barrier and babbled some nonsense about being privileged to travel on the same train.' Similarly, or conversely, his contempt can be just as massive. It's a pity that his long and acutely perceptive review of *High Windows* (one of a quartet of Larkin offerings reprinted here) doesn't have attached to it the almost equally long and hilarious exchange of letters with Professor G. Singh that followed on from

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it in *Encounter* in 1974-75, ending with:

> Is it a twist of fate or simply an extra gene, which dictates that I should be rewarded for writing an article on Philip Larkin by becoming entangled in an interminable correspondence with a Professor of Italian bearing an Oriental name and resident in Belfast?

Hero-worship and contempt are obliquely suggested by the title of James's book. 'The Pillars of Hercules', as he says in a foreword, means to a handful of *literati* not the classical environs of Gibraltar but a pub in Soho much frequented by those who traffic in the wares of Ian Hamilton's *New Review*, in which several of these pieces first appeared. The book is dedicated to Hamilton (already, in James's *The Metropolitan Critic* in 1974, designated 'trailblazer of his generation'), and it's clear why James thinks of him as an heroic figure – because Hamilton is a vigorous Nay-Sayer, a scourge of the flaccid, the phony, the wet and the mindless. Like Vidal, like James, Hamilton uses his contempt as cruel boys use salt on snails.

One difference between the admired Hamilton and James is that James is abundantly eager to become the master of many worlds: Wittgenstein and Contini, Solzhenitsyn and Pushkin, the political corridors of London and Washington, the Hollywood of Mailer and his *Marilyn*, are all traversed in *At the Pillars of Hercules*, as well as Auden, Lowell, Larkin, Betjeman, Jarrell, the novels of Chandler and Balchin, the devices and desires of the Sherlockologists, and the plays of Stoppard. Most of these are informed pieces of enthusiasm and even evangelism, defending the later Auden, resurrecting Balchin, presenting Contini to an audience which probably has scarcely heard of him, with plenty of back-handers on the way. The excellent essay on Stoppard, for example, which disarmingly admits to being a reader's and not a theatre-goer's view ('I go very rarely to the theatre, for what seems to me the sound reason that anything so repellent in occasional doses would most probably be fatal if the doses were frequent'), first of all clears the ground by briefly demolishing such figures in the thespian pantheon as John Hopkins, Harold Pinter, David Storey, Lindsay Anderson and Harold Hobson.

'Taking the brunt of new creative work is one of the things literary journalism is all about', James wrote in *The Metropolitan Critic*; and such muscular urgency – the jokes emitted from the side of his mouth while he takes the strain – is very much a part of *At the Pillars of Hercules* too. He isn't always, on small points, as accurate as his confident address might suggest: 'Nobody now could wade through Vachel Lindsay's *Roan Stallion*', for example, would be more convincing if *Roan Stallion* hadn't in fact been written by Robinson Jeffers; the BBC programme *Critics' Forum*, with which he makes much play in his Stoppard piece, has its apostrophe where I've put it, being plural and not singular, and has never been on Radio 4; and, in a sharp analysis of Crossman's *Diaries*, a recurring nightmare suffered by 'one of his literary editors' extends the personnel a bit too sweepingly, since Crossman's overlordship of the NS involved only one literary editor, as I know to my cost. But such quibbles don't dent the wholly readable, quick-witted, nimbly argumentative exuberance of a man who likes to think of himself, he says, as 'a hard-bitten realist'. More power to his jaws.

Blake Morrison

Coming or Going

Transatlantic Blues by WILFRID SHEED *Sidgwick & Jackson* £5.50
Cat on a Leash by ELIZABETH GUNDY *Macmillan* £4.95
New Writing and Writers 16 *Calder* £4.95 and £2.50
An End to Autumn by IAIN CRICHTON SMITH *Gollancz* £4.95

Wilfrid Sheed's new novel is well-timed, an initiation to the era of cheap transatlantic travel. In the past, with the States still expensive to get to, we've needed fiction that assures us that they're really not worth visiting anyway. Hence Evelyn Waugh's *The Loved One*, Kingsley Amis's *One Fat Englishman*, David Lodge's *Changing Places* – novels that reinforce English prejudices about American brashness and bad taste. Now that everyone is Lakering back and forth at no great cost, different kinds of novels are clearly called for – ones that question our assumptions about the Great Divide. What better, then, than a novel which subverts national stereotypes by having its hero shuttle across the pond so many times that he doesn't know whether he's English or American. This is Sheed's subject – a mid-life and mid-Atlantic identity crisis.

The hero of *Transatlantic Blues* is Monty Chatworth, a famous chatshow host who, on a flight between New York and London, is suddenly visited by his Catholic conscience: he wishes to do penance for his too-successful career. Finding no one willing to listen to his confession, he turns to 'Father Sony' – his tape-recorder. Out pours his life and on reels the tape in a way that makes for a fairly conventional *bildungsroman*, a Portrait of the Compere as a Much Travelled Young Man: an infant in England, a child in an American Catholic boarding school during World War II, an early adolescent in Welfare State London, a late adolescent back in America, an undergraduate at Oxford, a DJ in California, a star in New York. The rootlessness makes Chatworth schizoid – in England he plays the Yank, in America the limey, 'dashing off broad parodies of himself like a street cartoonist' – but is also the basis of his success: with so much ground-work in acting he's eventually capable of the ultimate performance – weekly TV appearances as a Sincere Person.

Chat-show MCs are a fairly easy target for satire, and there's something rather well-worn, too, in the handling of childhood (strained family relations, Catholicism, first sex). What lifts *Transatlantic Blues* above the ordinary is Chatworth's shame at having to re-live his past: it's this that creates the frenzied intimacy of the narrative voice, a voice which, in order to conceal its embarrassment, is always trying to outsmart and keep one step ahead of the reader. The jokes and *bon mots* which fill out the narrative – 'Conversation is like five people working at different hobbies', hotel rooms 'are really just becalmed air-

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planes . . . ways of saying *you haven't landed, you have no home*' – aren't just part of Chatworth's show-off routine, but a means of avoiding the embarrassments of the past. In the end we still can't be sure if he has talked to us from the heart: if we've listened properly we'll suspect that even his confessions are just another package.

There's further hectic travelling in Elizabeth Gundy's *Cat on a Leash*, with Luke and Brenda James on a five-hundred-dollars-a-day business trip through Europe. Sharp-eyed Luke is offering contracts to various scattered writing talents, and Brenda, well, she's just along for the shopping bargains. The Grand Tour takes in so many countries that the novel sounds at times like a guide book for American tourists ('you can buy just as nice sweaters at Marks and Sparks as you can at Biba'). Worse, on the grounds that there are marital strains and that these must be 'externalised' into an irritation with local facilities, Ms Gundy allows her couple to go in for the crudest type of touristic grumbling (rather like Texas millionaires complaining about the price of Spanish tomatoes): Parisian waiters shortchange, Zurich is a city of bad-tempered senior citizens, Vienna closes at noon on Saturday, German hotels are a rip-off, Dutch women have big knockers and hot pants, English people read *The Times* (you can see how quickly this sort of thing dates) and have stiff upper lips. All very wearing, and made the more so by the author's hundred-mile-an-hour prose.

It's something of a relief, then, when we reach the novel's turning-point: Brenda meets an old boyfriend in London and they embark on a frenzied ten-day affair. Luke takes this badly and on returning to America abandons the marital home. Brenda retaliates by disappearing to a remote New England island in an attempt to make him miss her; he doesn't. Nor does she fare much better with the island sandman, whose lack of worldly ambition makes a predictable contrast to Luke's go-getting. What's left but for Brenda to discover nature – and herself. It sounds like the makings of a feminist novel (women doing without men, self-realisation, etc), but Ms Gundy is too deeply enmeshed in the conventions of pulp romance – 'Every time her eyes met his, she felt her mouth start to quiver, felt the unspoken secret bubbling up between them' – to let anything quite so radical occur.

The third of this week's exercises in international relations comes from *New Writing and Writers*, which brings between the same covers two Americans, an Italian, a German, an Irishman, a Canadian and various Englishpersons. The prize exhibit is William Burroughs, whose 'Cobble Stone Gardens' plays off the written word against a series of group photographs. When your theme is the sickness of modern civilisation the inclusion of just about anything (even your own incoherence) can be said to be appropriate; still, it is hard to believe that the typical Burroughs sentence here – 'Broken throat vultures under a purple sky boots steaming manure' – has much to contribute to our understanding of modern technological culture. As for the rest, it's not enough to prevent *NWW 16* from being the most disappointing volume in the series for some time: a mediocre selection of poems from Sarah Lawson, Maryon Jeane and – slightly better – B. C. Leale (the publishers could do with a decent poetry editor); some sub-nouveau romancing from Sarah McCoy; two nice allegories from Dino Buzzatti (one of Calder's real finds); a puzzling little tale from Michael Moorcock; and other stories from David Craig, Neil Jordan, Elspeth Davie and (the pick of these) Kathleen Greenwood.

Finally, a quiet little stay-at-home novel by Iain Crichton Smith, provincial in setting and modest in scope. There's a recent Larkin poem which imagines the grimness of life as a 'spectacled schoolteaching sod/ . . . the wife in pod,/ And her parents coming to stay'. The situation in *An End to Autumn* is not unlike this: the settled but barren life of a schoolteaching couple, Tom and Vera, is disturbed by the arrival of Tom's mother, who has moved out of her flat to live with them. Vera feels Tom drifting away from her; she also resents Tom's mother's friendship with a working-class Catholic woman. Her attempt to remedy matters leads to a disastrous dinner party, a rape, and the near break-up of her marriage. But it also turns out to be a step towards a solution: at the end she is pregnant, mother-in-law has departed, and the marriage has been put on a new footing. The story is meticulously constructed and written with sympathetic insight into all the characters involved. As it unfolds, though, Crichton Smith begins to furnish his subdued interior with flashy symbolism: there is an absurd redemptive fire-ceremony just before the end, a rather pointed use of school texts – Tom teaches *The Waste Land* (= barrenness) and *King Lear* (= problems with parents) – and eventually a ponderous spelling-out of the significance of every object or event described. Still, an honest and likeable work.

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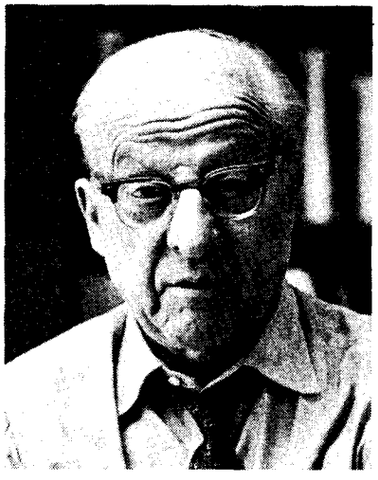
Joseph C. Harsch
Columnist
The Christian Science Monitor



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This English

Journalists are of course frequently pressed for time (and very drunk) when knocking out their pieces. But you'd expect a writer to be on his best behaviour when preparing a typescript for hardback publication. Our restless monitors have found that this isn't always the case: two near-homophones from Mr Holroyd, one from Mr Dillon White, and a nob's pronoun from Mr Mortimer. We end with a pleasing ambiguity from the *Evening Standard*, and a duff headline from the *Guardian*.

☐ There was no satisfaction anywhere. At the end of June, Philip Ritchie came down to stay with him at Ham Spray in order to recruit after an attack of tonsillitis . . . This disturbed frame of mind might have been prolonged indefinitely, had not, that September, a catalytic tragedy struck at them both. **Michael Holroyd** *Lytton Strachey* (C. J. Willis)

☐ Here was a man, he thought, who liked honesty and . . . would show magnitude, even compassion, to a worthy opponent. **James Dillon White** *Fair Wind to Malabar* (Hugh Newbury)

☐ Then they collected Norman . . . and took him home, leaving George and I in a state of gloomy suspense. **John Mortimer** *Rumpole of the Bailey* (W. Kanz)

☐ In an attempt to combat absenteeism, teachers are going straight to a truants' home as soon as their absence from class is noticed. **Sue Reid** *Evening Standard* (H.A. Wright)

☐ A Leasing Phenomena **Headline** *Guardian* (R. K. Gardiner)

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Remember My Name (X) *Screen on the Hill*
Paradise Alley (A) *Plaza 2*
The Amazing Captain Nemo (U) *Scene from 15 February*
Mon Oncle (U) *Scala*

Romaine Hart's elegant second Screen, the one at Haverstock Hill, opened a year and a bit ago with a first film, written and directed by a protégé and assistant of Altman: Alan Rudolph's *Welcome to LA*. Neatly enough and with great good sense, the same cinema is now showing his second feature, *Remember My Name*: if things continue thus, we probably shall. The name in question is, in fact, Emily (Geraldine Chaplin), and it must be said right away – even if I do seem to be claiming as much for other actresses rather a lot of late – that Miss Chaplin, at one time a deep embarrassment, is blossoming formidably as a performer.

Her Emily is something of a departure from the gawky, awkward, nervous and fairly dim ladies she played in *Nashville*, *A Wedding* and – of course – the first Rudolph, where (as a neglected wife) she developed an attention-getting cough in admiration of Camille. There is every reason why Emily should be coughing her heart out in the new movie, since she moves through it like a walking cigarette commercial, the white tube jutting from her mouth like an aimed pistol. But, by and large, this is the only outward sign of what may well be a tremendous inner turbulence: a brief fit of sobbing apart, the lady shows cool and wilfully determined. She arrives in a Southern Californian town, buys some new clothes and moves into a fairly seamy apartment house, where she rapidly melts the aloof black janitor, Pike, into getting her lamps, curtains, and so on. At one point, she unashamedly goes on her knees to him, hands outstretched: 'Clean sheets, clean sheets, drapes,' she croons, then slaps him, then hugs him, murmuring 'Hold me!' It is quite an act and purposely left ambiguous. Maybe she does, somewhere, need that hug as well.

Via many short scenes and spare dialogue, it emerges that this Emily is an ex-con, out after a 12-year-stretch for murdering her husband's girl friend. Neil (Anthony Perkins) has subsequently left New York and re-married, to one Barbara (Berry Berenson). Obviously and inexplicably come down in the world, he now works on a neighbouring building site. Systematically, yet as if she were making her mind up how to go about it, Emily sets out to hound Neil and Barbara, at first just driving out to watch him at work, suddenly peering in at a window of their house. In prison she had met the mother of the manager of a local supermarket: reluctantly, he gives her a job and a warning that if any money goes missing, guilty or not, she'll be fired.

Black Rita, the deputy manageress, takes an immediate dislike to Emily – 'we don't smoke up front', at which Emily promptly lights up again – and eventually fixes matters so that there is a shortage in her till. The hitherto genteel Ms Chaplin punches her ferociously and then jabs a pencil into her big, lounging boy friend's armpit when he threatens retaliation. Meanwhile, Emily has uprooted flowers from Neil's garden, tampered with Barbara's car, heaved a rock through the window while the couple are making love, and actually wandered around inside their house, finally confronting Barbara and telling how she knew Neil 'in the back of a crowded car' years ago: there is a moment here with kitchen knives, which appear to be the current in-weapon in the American cinema. 'Are you a good fuck? Yes, you're a good fuck,' enunciates Emily. 'And a good cook.' Then she is gone. Later, after that pencil-stabbing to which Barbara happens to be witness, she is pulled in by the police.

Now her previous marriage to Neil comes out and he refuses to press charges. She calls him 'spider-monkey', recalls old times, delivers a rehearsed speech, ending up with the maybe ironic 'Hold me, hold me'. Events move swiftly now. Neil is sacked from the site and, in a nicely paced, crazed sequence, meets Emily in a bar-restaurant, where they drink their way through the card: 'They make a poor Zombie here.' And so to bed at her place. In the morning, faithful Pike enters with a new lamp, to find Neil sleeping. Outside again, Emily tosses her apartment keys to Pike (excellent wounded dignity from Moses Gunn), telling him to lock it with Neil inside. This last act is accompanied by the prison-door clanging that has haunted Emily's dreams throughout.

Sound plays a large part, larger – in a sense – than the relative brevities of dialogue. On recurring TV screens, announcers and pundits drone on about an earthquake in Budapest, providing a sort of cynical there-is-a-world-elsewhere linkage. And then there is the skilful use made of several songs, the blues, written and sung off-screen by the incredible 83-year-old Alberta Hunter with exquisitely clear diction; they not only comment on but sometimes gently further the action. Those who know about such music more profoundly than I (which is not difficult) speak highly of the score. I certainly relished it, whereas Richard Baskin's stuff for *Welcome to LA* was mostly a pretentious pain in these cloth-ears. Overall, Mr Rudolph has taken an interesting and entertaining step forward with *Remember My Name*. If one stays curiously distanced from the proceedings, one is never less than distantly – and sometimes more closely – curious as to what our Emily will decide on, where her mysterious progress will end. End it does, in the event, with her blandly purchasing more clothes on Neil's snitched credit cards, going a little way out of town, changing in a field, and simply, very simply driving off. Enigmas remain: it is uncertain if Emily intentionally committed that murder; one wonders about her life with Neil in New York, which was manifestly dry martini rather than beer – Neil's 'You can't tear out my soul, because I've already done that myself' hardly explains the material descent; one wonders if one isn't left wondering about too much. And yet the conclusion has a satisfying click to it.

The slambang finale of *Paradise Alley*, written, directed and starred in by Sylvester Stallone, is – on the other hand – about as emotionally nutritious as bubble-gum. After the unsuccessfully effortful *F.I.S.T.*, this is a kind of return to the never-never-land of *Rocky*, a nasty and devoted piece of self-plagiarism. Stallone here manages to achieve the impossible: he is approximately four times as inaudible as in his first shambling, mumbling appearance before us. As it happens, this is of little importance, since merely watching the silly motions gets over what garbled message there is. When Stallone does want to put a line across, he manages this by saying it five or six ways so that the ear gradually has enough conviction to allow the brain to decode it. 'I don't need nobody . . . I'm sensitive . . . Everybody's faking everything.' Roger and out. Stallone struts through as Cosmo, the hugely unlikeable middle one of the Carboni brothers, picking a bare living in New York's Hell's Kitchen in 1946. He is a boastful, beastly petty con-man, patronising to the huge younger Carboni, Victor (Lee Canalito, a real-life boxer, one is informed) and to the limping elder one, a back-street undertaker, Lenny (Armand Assante). There are three marvellous-looking women marginally around, Victor's girlfriend, Susan (Aimee Eccles); a tart (Joyce Ingalls) improbably in love with Cosmo; and Annie (Anne Archer), who enjoys what is spelt out as a second short interlude with Lenny before he, for no given reason, rejects her again. They all deserved better.

Elsewhere, the doings centre on the gangsterish dive of the title, where wrestling constitutes the floor show. Cosmo sets docile Victor up as a professional wrestler and finally persuades Lenny to manage him. Lenny undergoes a witless character change, Victor wins fight after fight, Cosmo keeps right on mumbling. There is that culminating bout, practically to the death, with rain pouring down on to the ring, and a starry-eyed reconciliation between the warring elder brothers thanks to Victor picking himself up off the floor after (I thought) the combat was officially over. Never mind.

The Amazing Captain Nemo has no fewer than seven writers to its discredit, which will account for the epithet in the title. It is nice to see Burgess Meredith so steadily in work these days, and he pads about with a cosy snarl as another of those mad professors bent on world domination: this is a pallid *Star Wars* played out mostly near the bottom of the Pacific. There is even a dime-store Darth Vader. José Ferrer wakes up from cryogenesis as an agreeable Nemo who had discovered nuclear fission, lasers and cloning more than a century back, so improving on Jules Verne. Best line, from escaping frogman: 'Let's get behind that kelp.' Space constricts and the swiftest of mentions to the Scala's brave revival of Jacques Tati's *Mon Oncle* (1958). This was his second Hulot film, his first in colour, and has not, alas, worn well, though the print is excellent. There is some awful stilted, prissy dubbing and only a handful of vintage Tati gags.

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Television

Julian Barnes

Sherry, Chérie?

That etiolated humorist Andy Warhol was once being toadied to for being an artist who 'takes risks'. Listen, he replied, 'if you say that artists take "risks", it's insulting to the men who landed on D-Day, to stunt men, to baby-sitters, to Evel Knievel, to stepdaughters, to coal miners and to hitch-hikers, because they're the ones who really know what risks are.' Quite right too: a promoter may take risks with his money; a playwright may risk his play by giving it to Lindsay Anderson to direct (interesting, by the way, to note that Alan Bennett, apparently believing that *The Old Crowd* has been a *succès de scandale*, recanted his *Time Out* interview – 'I liked it very much . . . there is nothing in it that I didn't approve of . . . there was certainly no question of [Anderson] perverting my work'); but the idea of the artist as quasi-existential risk-taker, daring to go where the rest of us fear to tread, is now merely a critic's reflex. The only major risk an artist tends to take these days is with his self-esteem.

Mike Leigh's plays, though, do operate within an area of active, observable danger: that of improvisation. The plays he devises and directs begin without a script and are then built up with the actors during rehearsal; though, of course, the risks involved can be minimised at the editing stage. The latest result of this technique, *Who's Who* (BBC-1), was a larky, spirited piece about the stock-broking world and its castes. It cut between below-the-salt Alan (faultlessly Rossitered by Richard Kane), a devoted monarchist and deference voter living in murderous semi-detachdom with his cat-breeding wife, and a pair of young cravated stockies, hooray-henrying their way through a dinner party ('Oh God, got the gobbling-rods confused, haw, haw'). It wasn't 'about' the Stock Exchange, or the state of the nation (despite the Elgar and 'Sceptred Isle' opening credits), and was too indulgently caricaturish to be satirical; but if it was ultimately as directionless as a wafting sponge from *Life on Earth*, it remained bright and funny and studded with cloves of suburban truth. In one memorable moment, Alan turns to his stodge-faced wife and murmurs uxoriously 'Sherry, chérie?'

Perhaps the 'risk' in Leigh's plays is really that of improvised writing rather than of improvised performance (or perhaps he chooses his actors extremely carefully); since much of the time the result seemed almost as solidly carpentered as *The Voysey Inheritance*, David Jones's final production for Play of the Month (BBC-1). This is exactly the sort of work that television has a duty to revive, instead of wasting its energy on a Shakespeare export cycle: an Edwardian comedy-drama of ideas, its drawing-room setting makes it fit the studio well and its large cast makes it currently a bad buy for the theatre. Beerbohm, in his original notice, referred to 'Master Barker at his desk in the Shavian academy', and there are more than a few touches of Shaw ('Fine feelings, my dear, are as great a luxury as clean gloves'; 'Alice, suppose it's not failure I'm risking, but success?'). Yet the play firmly occupied its own ground, and its central thread – of the idealist compelled to turn honest cheat to right his father's wrongs and protect his family – was keenly elaborated. If Barker's intention – that the Voysey family should, with their middle-class 'tyranny, hypocrisy and boredom', in some way speak for England – was a touch over-ambitious (he was, after all, a daunting 28 when he wrote the play), his presentation of the blighting influence of inherited capital still argued freshly for 100 per cent death duties. He captured too the traditional English distaste for arguing from principles ('I've left theories to take care of themselves,' remarks George Booth, a fatly John Bullish character), and the distance we tend to leave – like a gap between bat and pad – between law and morality.

Jeremy Irons subtly managed Edward's progress from callow prig to wearily amused speculator, almost daring his creditors to bankrupt him; and if his brothers were a bit four-square in the writing, it was well covered up in the acting (with an excellent squawking major from Jeremy Child). The women, with a more realistic gradation between them, were even better: from a touching Emma Piper, as Edward's fiancee (disproving Beerbohm's view that she was too lifelike for the play's good), through to Julie Covington's credibly down-to-earth free-thinking journalist: the latter performance from an actress whom – to judge from previous parts – one would have bet against being able to look anything near Edwardian.

So good was the acting that you might have bought the old, idealistic fallacy play-goers like to maintain, that all the actors must have been outstandingly sensitive and intelligent in order to be able to ply their subtle mimetic art. This generous fancy couldn't have received a more salutary come-uppance than by switching channels immediately to *Twenty Years On* (BBC-2), in which five 1958 RADA classmates were reunited to prove unwittingly the abiding truth of their profession: that actors often get by without brains, but boy, do they need scripts – if only of the Leigh variety.

The five met again at one of those artificial telly-lunches where the waitress spends all her time not tripping over cables and the arrival of a pumpkin is met by mike-hogging cries from all directions of 'Oooh, Pumpkin.' Two of them had left the stage; one had become a writer (Hugh Whitemore, whose *Rebecca* this week revealed what film-goers in 1940 were forbidden to know: that the cad with the pad really did total his wife); one was a rep toiler; and one was Susannah York. Given the hair-raising banality of the exchanges which survived, one dreads to think what was left on the cutting-room floor. A clean-faced naval wife, who sweetly admitted she hadn't been much good as an actress because she'd been 'shallow', hollered at her classmates in greeting, 'Isn't it extraordinary – we all look like ourselves, only quite a lot older.' You might have thought there was no answer to that, but Miss York, arriving a few minutes later, put an elegant gloss on the aperçu: 'Everybody's so different – but so the same in a way.' The men who had grown beards were lengthily twitted for having grown beards. Towards the end of the lunch the naval wife, in ringing Swan-and-Edgar tones, self-revealingly wondered, 'Do you think, looking back, that *Look Back in Anger* was all that important?' It was about the only frail and human remark to be heard, and the others practically threw the pumpkin at her for such treason.

Theatre

David Harsent

Grafting

Talent *ICA*
Look Back in Anger *Young Vic*

Connoisseurs of TV kitsch have had few delights, in recent years, to match those afforded by *New Faces* – the talent comp for which rueful aspirants queued like drab butterflies waiting for the barbarian's wheel. Most were duly broken, disembowelled and finally dissolved in the acid judgments of the panel of resident pros; but from time to time the viewer, squirming sometimes with embarrassment, sometimes with indecent delight, could peep between his fingers to discover that chance, or the law of averages, had delivered a performer of accomplishment.

Such a one was Victoria Woods, a tubby, Lancastrian girl, who sang dotty little songs that made much use of the ribaldry, pathos and humour of commonplace existence. It's no wonder that her appearances stood out amid the sallow cleavages pretending to be Liza Minelli and the endless procession of dress shirts and velvet bow ties, each shrieking that someone had left his cake out in the rain. Not surprising, either, that her play should be set backstage at a Northern club where a talent contest is under way. Julie, the amateur hopeful, played with just the right combination of nasal aggression and wretched vulnerability by Hazel Clyne, arrives to tackle her Big Chance still dressed in her office clothes and desperately needing a pee. With her, in a tatty dressing-room littered with fag-ends and beer bottles, is her friend Maureen (Victoria Woods). It's obvious that the pattern of their relationship was established during schooldays and isn't likely to change: Julie is the kind of go-getter who often gets had; Maureen the plain, fat companion who never saw the back of the bicycle sheds.

From their initial exchanges, it's clear that Victoria Woods is well schooled in comic timing and economy. She knows a thing or two, as well, about pacey natter and the downbeat cadences of working-class drollery. Julie, reporting on her mother's gamut of illnesses, relates that she was warned, 'I won't thank you if my chest gets up in the night'; and though mother's operation was successful, 'she's not to wear stretch pants or move the spin dryer for a month'. It's the kind of patter that Peter Tinniswood uses brilliantly, that Les Dawson delivers impeccably; and Victoria Woods matches up to that sort of company pretty well, managing to sustain the tone – though carefully modifying it – when it is discovered that one of the resident band was responsible for making Julie pregnant while she was still a school girl, then disappearing without trace. He it was, of course, who assisted Julie in her early claims to infamy by

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picking her up at the school gates in a red sports car. The play is full of that brand of recognisable veracity, tiny moments, but accurate and unforced.

There is something indelibly *likeable* about the characters – a fondness in the writing – that becomes most noticeable when a couple of old-timers make an appearance: a magician and his assistant, fresh from a resounding success at the Hard of Hearing Beetle Drive. They are funny, but never made fun of; the only real villain in the piece is the oleaginous, tit-groping compere, who slithers on and off with promises of telly appearances in exchange for a quickie. The action is punctuated with a number of Victoria Woods's songs, neatly grafted, and containing some lines that will surely become part of the graffiti writers' canon.

For all its virtues, of course, *Talent* is a slight piece of work, leaning comfortably on its sources, content to leave its audience happy and unperturbed. Unlike – at least in its day – *Look Back in Anger*, now revived (or rather given a wetly ineffectual kiss of life) at the Young Vic. The trouble with landmarks is that they tend to be things one moves on from. I suppose I saw the play about three years after it was first staged (1959 or thereabouts – when I was beginning to learn how to hate efficiently), and it was distinctly exhilarating to be able to take a bath in all that ready-made vitriol. The Queen, the bomb, class-warfare, the unspeakable power of women – it was difficult to know which face to spit in first; and here, suddenly, was a play in which all of those loathed countenances were sullied in the course of one evening of sustained flobbing. I'd like to add that my current capacity for hatred and intolerance vastly exceeds the malicious irrascibility of adolescence; however, seeing the play again was rather like re-visiting a house one lived in as a child: everything seemed smaller, less imposing, lacking the grandness and sense of space one remembered.

Jimmy's logorrhea comes over as little more than a cataract of self-indulgent petulance, the bears and squirrels passages make your toes curl, the set-pieces ('It won't be picking daffodils with Auntie Wordsworth', etc) make your eyes narrow and the celebrated dramatic twist at the beginning of the final act makes your shoulders droop. There's no question that the play was a small revolution in the Fifties; indeed, one can still see why; but in order to be perdurable any work must combine innovatory qualities with depth of vision and concerns that are not going to appear transient in 20 years' – 70 years' – time. Osborne's play was innovatory. It's not helped along, either, by the performances turned in by the cast. They skate along the surface of the lines, hurrying all the time, as if they were prompting the audience to a recollection of the play. John Labanowski, as Jimmy, froths and fluffs his way through his part, frenetically over-animated during his speeches, then oddly expressionless while others do their bit. Susan Wooldridge, who plays Alison, projects with a dogged resonance – her 't' sounds ticking like heel-taps and her lengthier deliveries taking on the throttled boom of someone imitating someone imitating posh.

Finally, since this is my last piece before Benedict Nightingale returns, and therefore my last week of concentrated theatre-going, let me enter a plea on behalf of London's audiences. Over the past month, I have twice been treated for frostbite, have endured the spectacle of strong men keening with pain as they teetered from auditoria, have viewed plays through a fog of condensed breath and have felt three porcelian crowns on my incisors crack as my teeth chattered uncontrollably. Might we not manage to heat our theatres? Or is the temperature deliberately regulated to keep people awake?

Art

John Spurling

Seeing Double

Gary Wragg *Acme Gallery, 43 Shelton Street, Covent Garden*
Tom Phillips *Marlborough*

Gary Wragg, says Bryan Robertson in his catalogue introduction, 'is good news for all painters'. Certainly, coming on the heels of last year's John Moores Exhibition, where abstract painting seemed to have reached a terminal phase of ponderous vacuity, his show has the air of a festival. Of all kinds of painting, abstraction reveals most directly and unequivocally the artist's basic equipment; stripped of the disguise of subject-matter, the canvas declares itself almost at a glance – alive or dead, visually energetic or not. On top of pitilessly exposing the artist as a painter (how he handles, colour, line, texture, space), abstraction also exposes him as a person, since whatever appears on the canvas can be nothing but a portrait of his own psychological entrails, unless it's an imitation of somebody else's. No wonder that, faced with such a stern test, so many contemporary artists have peeled off into conceptualism, performance, sociology, agitprop, or going for long walks with a camera.

It is immediately clear, even through the windows of the Acme Gallery, that Wragg – who spent nearly ten years in various art schools and is now 32 – is both fully equipped for the test and as bold as they come. He goes in on all fronts, with a profusion of bright colours and reels of line, on a grand scale and in quantity. There are 15 large canvases in the show – three of them at least 15 feet long – and all were done in the last two years.

One's first impression, having entered the gallery, is of hectic ferocity: reds and yellows, only partly damped down by splashes of green and blue, flame and burst over the canvas, while powerful spirals of black line leap about like untethered springs. This impression is soon corrected. Although Wragg seems to use colour like a child with its first paint-box – not so much indiscriminately as comprehensively and enthusiastically – his linearity asserts a strange control over the confusion. Strange, because the lines themselves are quite as active and anarchistic as the colours. Some of them define colour areas, but most are busy forming tangles, streamers or scribbles on their own. Yet in conjunction with the equally independent patches of cool colour, they tame the reds and yellows, develop a sense of space and transform explosion into floating movement.

There is one large canvas in the exhibition which is not a painting at all, but a charcoal drawing. On the left, a dangerous-looking set of spiky curves projects from beneath a dense rectangular screen of horizontal strokes; on the right, an enormous spiral whirls into a vortex at its own centre. But gradually the image of imprisonment on the left resolves itself into something more like a palm-frond, with the soft tail of a bird hanging down, while the image of electric energy on the right becomes a plump tribal god, contemplating his own navel. All Wragg's best paintings have this protean quality, the wild and chaotic shifting before your eyes into the still and delicate and back again.

The magic doesn't always work. The more densely Wragg builds up his coloured areas, the less air – in the form of lightly-coloured backgrounds or intervals of cool colour – he gives himself, the more inert his paintings are. One realises that colour, far from being the dominant element, is actually subordinate to line. In the especially successful *Red, Yellow, Black and White*, for example, a patchwork of mainly hot colours – sweeping across from the left and threatening to engulf the area of feathery black and white on the right – is itself a tight linear composition of beaky and fish-like shapes. One's last impression, then, is less of wild beasts and passions unleashed than of a man who can do amazing things with a lariat. The arrival of such a formidable performer may not, after all, be very good news for other painters, but at least it should make them look to their laurels.

Tom Phillips is a peculiarly literary artist. In the Royal Academy Jubilee Exhibition of 1977 he showed an unfinished painting, packed with recondite detail, called *Beginning to think about Dante*. The same painting, now finished, reappears in his Dante-dominated show at the Marlborough and the catalogue contains a long essay by Phillips himself, setting out exactly what every detail in the painting signifies. Many changes have been made. For example, a triple portrait of the artist himself is now suspended between the three steps of Purgatory and the triple-headed Wolf of avarice and malice, while the two cupids symbolising Dante's and Phillips's common birth-sign have disappeared in favour of Gandhi's sandals ascending straight to heaven 'without recourse to step or stair'. Flatly painted in a welter of bright colours, it is a striking picture whose appeal lies in its being a puzzle – compositional for the artist, intellectual for the spectator. The snag is that if you read Phillips's exegesis (a model of clarity and unpretentiousness), the puzzle is solved and the picture itself turns into a kind of Dante wall-chart.

On the other hand, when Phillips forsakes his literary sources and attempts a straight portrait or an abstract, he is sadly dull. His best work is done when he translates literature (but not its exegesis) into paint. In *Dante in his study with episodes from the Inferno* a large, flat, schematic portrait of Dante reverberates against 34 miniature inset canvases depicting blurred, nightmarish figures in an expressionist style. *The Dark Wood* is entirely composed of the stencil-shaped letters spelling *Una Selva Oscura* in green, brown, dark blue and yellow – at once the image of a wood and a concept. From a distance, *I had not thought Death had undone so many* . . . looks like an abstract – rows of multi-coloured blobs set on a squared and striped field of coloured greys. Close to, the blobs materialise into tiny

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mask-like heads. It is an extraordinary effect, quite explicit, quite straightforward and even mundane, yet its lack of mystery is its mystery and Tom Phillips, who would never be guilty of such an obscurantist paradox in prose, can bring it off most subtly in paint.

Music

Andrew Clements

Airings

MusICA *ICA Theatre; further concerts 11, 18, 25 February; 11, 18, 25 March*

Until this season the ICA has never managed to support contemporary music in the way that it regularly fosters the visual and performing arts. The Roundhouse has tended to attract the events that might otherwise have been taken up by the ICA; those that finish up there usually do so because it was a last resort. But at last a new series of ten concerts, organised for the ICA by Adrian Jack, provides a genuine and substantial contribution to new music in London, concentrating on areas neglected by the regular concert circuit. There is an emphasis on young performers and composers, neglected figures and 'experimental' music. The blend very much reflects Jack's own range of interests. Evenings devoted to Hanns Eisler and Giacinto Scelsi are promised later in the series, but already there have been two events of outstanding interest: a comprehensive 50th-anniversary tribute to Jean Barraqué and a retrospective of Cornelius Cardew's music of the Sixties and early Seventies.

Barraqué is the most isolated and enigmatic of the generation of composers that appeared in the early Fifties. A study of contemporary music published in 1961 claimed him as the greatest composer since Beethoven and his reputation has hardly recovered from that sort of praise. When he died in 1973 he left only seven completed works, and performances have been few and far between. The two pieces played at the ICA, *Séquence* and the Sonata for piano, are early compositions standing outside the main body of his work, for in 1955 he discovered Hermann Broch's novel *The Death of Virgil* and thereafter dedicated his artistic life to composing a gigantic musical commentary on the book. In the ICA's celebrations this phase of Barraqué's career was represented by two lectures – a hugely illuminating examination by Maria Shevtsova of *The Death of Virgil* and Barraqué's approach to it, and a less helpful introduction to the music by G. W. Hopkins, though that at least provided a chance to hear tapes of the two Barraqué works yet to be performed in Britain, *Au delà du hasard* and *Le temps restitué* – tangled, elusive scores that urgently need live performances in London.

By contrast *Séquence*, settings of Nietzsche for soprano and ensemble, seemed a limpid piece, very much a product of its time (1950-55) in its *pointilliste* scoring but equally characteristic of its composer in the glistening textures and luscious vocal writing apparently inspired by Flagstad's voice. The performance by Josephine Nendick and an ensemble by James Judd could have been more seamless and better shaped, but Roger Woodward's playing of the Piano Sonata was overwhelming. The work has acquired a mythic reputation as a classic of 20th-century piano literature; it's a huge, passionate two-movement work lasting some 45 minutes, a fiercely concentrated motivic argument of stark, fearsome contrasts. Woodward, playing like a man possessed, repeated the entire Sonata as an encore. His recording of it has just been reissued by Unicorn (UNS 263).

Cornelius Cardew underwent a conversion to Communism in the early Seventies and now writes musically naïve, if politically populist pieces. But the earlier work that he now disowns remains the most original contribution to the British experimental movement. 'Experimental' has become the description of music that rejects the Western art-music history in favour of a traditionless, often systematic, idiom. Yet for all the lack of conventional notation in the two sets of piano pieces included in John Tilbury's ICA programme, *Winter Potatoes* and *February Pieces*, they impressed more by their witty reworkings of 19th-century keyboard figurations and disjunct tonal usages than by any strikingly new sound world or syntax. *Autumn 60* and *Solo with Accompaniment* are both 'indeterminate' scores: the players choose the pitch, duration and dynamic of the sounds within areas defined by the composer. The realisation of *Solo* in a version for trombone and piano was the more effective; *Autumn 60* emerged as rather crude in sound event and inconsequential in impact. Cardew's music needs more frequent airings in a variety of performances to realise its full potential.

For all the value of the series, the ICA itself does little to show that it's sympathetic to regular concerts. It seems impossible for any event there to start on time, or for the audience to be admitted to the auditorium without being forced to wait in a queue. Performances are punctuated by a variety of noises off, while the plumbing provides a constant accompaniment. Attention to such niceties would at least be some indication that the ICA was proud of the series arranged for it.

Roger Woddis

All Clear

Nobody put their hand out,
Nobody took a bribe,
Nobody was compromised
By acts you could describe.

Nobody got away with it,
Nobody thought they could,
And all of them were honest men,
And all of them were good.

Nobody bought a silver gift
To please somebody's wife,
Nobody did a single thing
To poison public life.

Nobody bought a cabinet,
Whatever you may hear,
And all of them were honest men,
And all were in the clear.

Nobody did a secret deal,
Nobody was for sale,
Nobody bent the rules at all,
And nobody went to jail.

And all of them were honest men,
As white as driven snow,
And all lived on a higher plane,
And shat on those below.

Rock Music

Mark Kidel

Metal Illness

Siouxsie and the Banshees: 'The Scream' *Polydor* £4.75

'There is no hope,' Siouxsie and the Banshees scream with metallic precision on their disturbing and nihilistic first album – without doubt one of the most impressive to come out of the New Wave. But like most other articulate rock musicians of the late Seventies, their almost catatonic despair arises out of a well-developed sense of morality, of how the world *might* be. Ten years ago, the same disgust was expressed very differently: the counter-culture turned its back on the greyness of the rational and planned world, celebrating alternative values and offering a living image of a possible future. For the great majority of the rock poets of today, the future most likely to succeed is too grim to contemplate, and the dreams of the summer of 1967 are a piece of social history.

The world of Siouxsie and the Banshees is caught somewhere between the last stifling housing estate cul-de-sac and the edge of mental breakdown. It is the unadulterated product of a world which relies on ECT and battery-hens for its happiness and survival. The lyrics (mostly by bass player Steven Severin) and the music are full of passion, but they are cold and entirely without love, any trace of positive emotion buried deep beneath an inescapable obsession with the hell that we have made for ourselves. *Metal Postcard* (dedicated to John Heartfield – a possible clue to the band's art-school connections) heralds a totally programmed existence, well-oiled by engineers and technocrats, but one-dimensional and without heart.

The only escape available is into madness – not the wild drug-assisted antics of flower power, but a more tragic and violent breed of derangement: the crazed collapse of a robot that has run amok. *Jigsaw Feeling*, the first song on the album, is about what sociologists would call 'alienation' or 'anomie', a failure to connect with the consensus values of society and a simultaneous inability to construct a workable set of alternative priorities. Siouxsie, her voice vibrant with deep-frozen despair, sings of 'the intangible bonds that keep me sitting on the verge of a breakdown, of a reaction, of a result', and the housewife of *Suburban Relapse* contemplates murder or exposing herself to the neighbours, anything that might express just that 'reaction' or 'result', a step outside society's subtle programme. The lover of *Carcass*, the most

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unpalatable track of the lot, is 'in love with your stumps, in love with your bleeding, in love with your pain': it is a psychopath's hymn, a wallow in the gore, all the more seductive for the excellence of the music that accompanies it – a stark, crystal-clear sound built around hard blocks of guitar chords and fierce but well-defined drumming. *Carcass* – it cannot be a coincidence – is juxtaposed with *Helter Skelter*, the Lennon-McCartney ditty that launched the Manson Murders. It is clear, though, that Siouxsie and the Banshees are *reflecting* rather than advocating the brutality that is so powerfully expressed in their music.

'Soft' rock has always been a contradiction in terms, and from The Who onwards, rock'n'roll has been generally accepted as one of our culture's precious safety valves, an opportunity for players and fans to pour out some of their excess energy and aggression. For all, except the Festival of Light, it is good, clean, acceptable catharsis. Siouxsie, however, is a very different sort of high priestess, taking rock's rites of purification into dangerously dark territory, attacking the techniques of fascism and totalitarianism, but invoking those forces to do so. The whole album treads fearfully close to the murky boundary between painting a dour picture of present circumstances and celebrating its grim horror.

The quality and commitment of the music are guaranteed to make you want to dance, but not without a certain feeling of ambiguity, for it is a dance of death rather than life. Siouxsie and the Banshees may be aware of the paradox, and perhaps it is a death which precedes resurrection, a necessary journey into the inferno within and without us and a prelude to the creation of a radically transformed world. *Nicotine Stain*, a song about those of us who will choke to death on clogged-up lungs, gives an indication of the band's social concern, and only those who believe in hope and change can sing with such conviction that 'there is no hope'. There is too much, in spite of this, to suggest that they are the unwilling victims of the metal world they so hate, swallowed up by the rock machine and marketed as just another – perhaps more threatening – line of product. The band appears to be sensitive enough to have recognised the trap, but it is this in particular which makes their raising of such satanic forces – if only as an artistic pose – send shivers down one's spine. There is no way of knowing just where this band's deep flirtation with madness and terminal violence will lead. Let us hope it is not to one of those irresistible new Nuremberg gatherings so frighteningly forecast in Elvis Costello's anti-NF song *Night Rally*.

Weekend Competition

No 2552 **Set by E. O. Parrott**

The NS's 'London Diary' has been getting about a bit lately. So why not a sample para from, say, a 'Paris Diary' at the time of the Terror, a 'Boston Diary' of 1773, a 'Hastings Diary' of 1066, and so on. Pre-1945 only; 150 words max; by 23 February.

Result of No 2549 **Set by Big John**

We asked for literary clerihews whose first two lines rhymed a title and an author.

Report **by Len the Unlucky**

Short-straw week for Len again: only room for you. Ah well, at least I'm in work. Two Newtons apiece.

Candy
By Mahatma Gandhi
Is about passive resistance
To fleshly existence.

War and Peace
By Peter De Vries
Has incidental joys
Not found in Tolstoy's.

ALAN HATCH

The Complete Poems of Auden
By Nina Bawden
Is entirely in prose
As far as it goes.

Her Privates We
By Private 19023
Is a sequel to the book you thought you knew
By Private 19022.

'Mr Bleaney'
By Seamus Heaney
Is a verse monologue
By an Iron Age corpse in a bog.

SIMON ANTHONY

Bevis
By F. R. Leavis
Is a tale in the great tradition
Of a paranoid lad with ambition.

The Turn of the Screw
By Albert Camus
Is set in Algeria
And couldn't be drearier.

ANN MAXWELL

L'Histoire d'O
By Henry David Thoreau
Concerns torturing the ass
Of a girl near Concord, Mass.

A Drunk Man Looks at a Thistle
By Lord David Cecil
Goes under *belles-lettres*, not verse,
And it could be worse.

The First Circle
by Angela Thirkell
Tends to look a bit thin
Compared with Solzhenitsyn.

LIBERTY HALL

White Fang
By R. D. Laing,
Now praised, now derided:
Myself? – we're divided.

TIM HOPKINS

Paradise Lost
By Laurens Van Der Post
Shows how a kind of African Nature
Mysticism can
Justify God's ways to man.

GAVIN EWART

The Ballad of the Sad Café
By Miss du Maurier
Is not the song of an Indian take-away
On the road to Mandalay.

BARRY ANTHONY

Vanity Fair
By A. J. Ayer
Interprets our antics
As so much semantics.

T. A. BOWELL

The Origin of Species
Is a work of Friedrich Nietzsche's
Which illuminates the lustra
Before Zarathustra.

BRIAN ALDISS

Anna Karenin
By V. I. Lenin
Ends in frustration
At the Finland station.

ANDY RASHLEIGH

In A Girl in Winter
By Harold Pinter
The lovers go dutch
And don't talk much.

ANGELA GORGAS

When We Were Very Young
By Mao Tse-Tung
Has you sobbin'
At his red red Christopher Robin

B. MOORING

To the Lighthouse
By Mrs Mary Whitehouse:
Man refrains from sex
To prevent wrecks.

V. PLUMB

George Bernard Shaw's
Jaws
Shows a remarkable feeling for
The thought processes of a carnivore.

JOHN STANLEY

Rain
By Michael Frayn
Should pull in the crowds
After Clouds.

JANE NORTH

To the Lighthouse
By Mary Whitehouse:
More *Illuminatio*
Than *Fellatio*.

MARK STOREY

The Ill-Made Knight
By T. H. White.
Object of quest: Grail
Results: Fail.

KEN CORRI

War and Peace
By Merlyn Rees
Puts Labour's case for another new lease of life
In place of 'In Place Of "In Place Of Strife"'.

GINA BERKELEY

Mansfield Park
By Kenneth Clark:
More interested in ornamental ceilings
Than in Fanny's feelings.

A. M. SAYERS

In Albert and the Lion
By Cornelius Ryan
The lion also succeeds in downing
General Browning.

BOB DORAN

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A Christmas Carroll
By C. L. Dodgson
Did not ring a Bell
With Charlotte Brontë

CHRISTOPHER EDWARDS

Jane Eyre
By Baudelaire
Is a decadent tale for the absinthe minded
Of a school-marm's boss who by love is blinded.

BARBARA SIMON

The White Goddess
By Roger Woddis
Would mix pith with
Myth.

BILL GREENWELL

The Wandering Jew
By 'Q'
Went askew
And Eugène had to Sue.

G. A. SHIRES

Nineteen Eighty Four
By GBS
Claims that history is random.
QED.

C VITA-FINZI

René
By Genet
Is seldom banal
Though often anal.

MOLLY FITTON

Cousine Bette
By Colette
Shows a poor relation putting her snobbish
family on the spot
By threatening to become *une grande cocotte.*

MARTIN FAGG

Cousin Pons
By Capt. W. E. Johns
Tells of a French air ace whose addiction to art
and Chanel No 5 gives Biggles
The giggles.

COLIN KIMBERLEY

Robinson Crusoe
By Jean-Jacques Rousseau
Suggests that the Social Contract we understand
Is printed on sand.

W. J. WEBSTER

Goldfinger
By Issac Bashevis Singer:
Failed rabbi Jacob Bond, now successful
marriage broker,
Loses at poker.

RAQUEL B. A. HATTEN

Dr No
By Harriet Beecher Stowe
Plays down 007's sexual penchants
And gives him a social conscience.

Live and Let Die
By Christopher Fry;
Blofield, Bond and M gently debate who is worse
In blank verse.

SARAH BLANQUETTE

Prudence and the Pill
By Angela Brazil
Is a book to which Arthur Marshall
Is partial.

ANDREW DIAMOND

A Talent to Amuse
By Ted Hughes:
The humour of Crow
In eight volumes. Ho ho.

GEORGINA HAMMICK

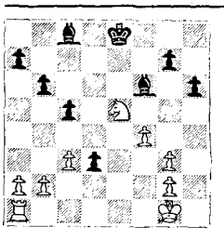
Tony Miles

Chess

No 119 **November Problems**

The November competition was not too demanding. **Problem 107 (Q4nK1/1pq2pp1/3p1B1p/1B1P4/8/2P2b2/ P4PrP/4RK2)** caught a few entrants out. No-one actually fell into the trap of 1. . . . RxP?? 2.QxNch, KxQ; 3.R-K8mate, but some overlooked the preparatory 1 . . . Q-B5ch! 2.RxQ, RxP; when . . . R-R8 mate cannot be prevented. The alternative 1. . . . PxB would be grossly inferior even if it does win, but after 2.R-K3! the position is not completely clear. (*On the immediate 2.R-K8,* QxP is good enough eg 3.RxNch, K-N2; 4.R-N8ch, K-R2; 5.R-R8ch, K-N3; 6.Q-N8ch, K-R4; 7.QxPch, R-N3; 8.R-K8, Q-B8ch; 9.R-K1, Q-N4. However, 2. . . . RxP is not so clear because of 7.RxPch when white can struggle on) *Now* 2. . . . BxP is best (Q-B4, RxB) and on 3.R-K8, QxP again should suffice, but 3.P-QB4! confuses the issue: . . . B-B3; 4.BxB, QxB; 5.R-K8, or . . . RxP? 4.R-N3ch, or . . . R-N4; 4.PxB, Q-B8ch; 5.R-K1. **Problem 108 (6K1/p4ppp/Qp2n3/2r5/3q4/P1N5/ 1P3PPP/3R2K1)** also collected a few victims. 1. . . . RxN is *obvious, but several missed either* 2.Q-B1! or its refutation (2.Q-K2, R-B1; 3.RxQ, NxR; 4.Q any, R-B8(ch) 5.QxR, N-K7ch wins) :—2. . . . R-B1! 3.RxQ, NxR; 4.K-R1, (else R-B8) N-K7! and there is no defence to . . . R-B8. **Problem 109 (8/8/8/8/1r2bpkp/6p1/3R2P1/5RK)** was also fairly straightforward. After 1. . . . BxP! the black pawns rush irresistably onward eg 2.RxB, P-R6; 3.R-QR2, P-B6; 4.R-B1 (what else?) P-R7ch; 5.RxP (5.K-R1, K-R6; 6.R-B3, R-N8 mates) PxRch; 6.KxP, (6.K-R1, K-N6 and there are no stalemate tricks) R-N7ch; 7.K-N1, K-N6 followed by R-KR7 *winning*).

For those new to problem solving, competitions are run on a (calendar) monthly basis, usually series of four (gremlins and Fridays permitting), and prizes awarded to the best sets of solutions. If you happen to get the first one wrong – don't despair. Quite often there is no completely correct set of entries. It would help my filing system immensely if solvers could send each solution on a separate sheet of paper or postcard. November prizewinners: First equal – Messrs Bradley, Brown and Taylor (£10 each) Consolation prizes to Messrs Allen, Cornforth, McSheehy, Murphy, Sobey and Southgate (£3 each).

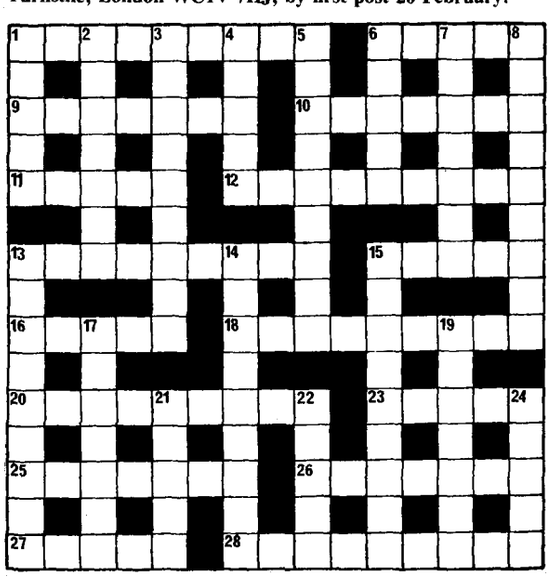


Problem 119
Black to play. How should the game go? Answers to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked not later than Wednesday 21 February.

Solution to Problem 117
1.R-K7! P-B3; (If RxR, PxQ or KxR, Q-K4ch or QxP, RxR) 2.RXNP! and White wins 2. . . . KxR3, Q-N4ch or 2. . . . RxP; 3.RxPch, KxR; 4.R-N6ch or 2. . . . R-Q3; 3.R-N8ch, K-B2; 4.RxQ.

Weekend Crossword 1292

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1292, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 20 February.



ACROSS

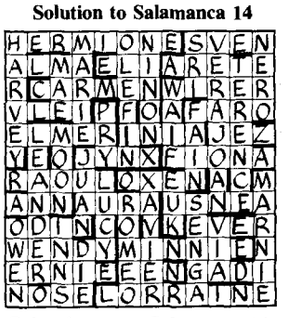
1 Outstanding feature of the tall but not heavy (9).
6 Be loathsome but reverse of outcast (5).
9 Man with twitch – it's a matter of heredity (7).
10 In sympathy strike before destination is reached (7).
11 Composer of subtle harmonies (5).
12 Hero's friend goes in like this backing into shrubs (9).
13 Fix an afternoon back in bed being submissive (9).
15 The yarn in full is less amusing (5).
16 Depart in some pain (5).
18 Missile base provides useful plant (9).
20 Farms have converted into town (9).
23 Piece of literature which is universal in backward branches of learning (5).
25 'You are idle shallow *things: I am not of your* ——' (*Twelfth Night*) (7).
26 The animal would become fat if a backward-looking writer were missing (7).
27 Carver is finished outside the ring (5).
28 Temporarily in charge, he makes progress about giving thanks to the king (9).

DOWN

1 Philosopher gives man a means of going up (5).
2 Something to wear which gives one gravity in the midst of drink and food (7).
3 Delayed recovery for the side (9).
4 A final blow finishes the lizard (5).
5 Cruel man makes people go into mountains (9).
6 Where there is only one sailor in the navy (5).
7 Birds fond of piano (7).
8 The tardy nose out what is becoming hidden (9).
13 Man in low temperature needs source of heat (9).
14 Cool as father returns, he enters the room (9).
15 Town frequently after the most vulgar (9).
17 Circle over it if the town were in ruins (7).
19 Wide open spaces not in front (7).
21 Something like a ruff for a magistrate (5).
22 Means to the grinding of the masses (5).
24 Snake beheads a companion of snakes (5).

SETSQUARE

Solution to Salamanca 14



Prizewinners to Salamanca 14

Egan Bernal (Haverhill)
David Wendon (Lowestoft)
J. Hopkinson (London WC1)

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APPOINTMENTS

One Parent Families

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR ONE PARENT FAMILIES

Legal Worker

The National Council for One Parent Families has a vacancy within its Rights Department for a legal worker. We are looking for somebody qualified and experienced in family and welfare Law.

The legal worker would advise individuals on legal and rights matters, develop training material, help maintain legal information services and have some responsibility for advising on policy development at management level. The worker would also be expected to assist with the preparation of leaflets and other documents which affect single parents.

Salary will be in the region of £4,500, dependent upon experience and qualifications.

If you are interested, please contact either Harry Fletcher or Jane Streather (01-267 1361) for an informal discussion or write direct for further information and application form to **The Director, National Council for One Parent Families, 255 Kentish Town Road, London, NW5.** Application forms to be returned by **7 March 1979.**

The Anti-Apartheid Movement

is seeking a new full-time member of staff whose responsibilities include membership and the distribution of Anti-Apartheid News. Current wages £47.50 p.w. plus LVs are subject to review. For further details write to Executive Secretary, Anti-Apartheid Movement, 89 Charlotte Street, London W1.

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£6,300 p.a.

The National Association of Co-operative Officials

is a small trade union catering for management grades with 6,000 members throughout the UK based in Manchester. The Assistant General Secretary position carries wide responsibility but, primarily, the successful candidate will be a capable and self-motivating negotiator with sound practical IR experience — gained on either trade union or employer side. Extensive UK travel is involved and a car is provided. A knowledge of the UK Co-operative Movement would be advantageous. This position presents an opportunity for a person with enthusiasm and drive to gain high level experience in all aspects of trade union activity. Conditions of employment include a contributory pension scheme. Write for application form to: **L. W. Ewing, General Secretary, National Association of Co-operative Officials, Saxone House, 56 Market Street, Manchester M1 1PW.**

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Salary commences at £7,298 p.a. rising to £7,748 p.a. after three years.

Only applicants with specialist collective bargaining experience need apply.

Further details of position and application form may be obtained from **Clive Jenkins, General Secretary, ASTMS, 10/26a Jamestown Road, London NW1 7DT.**

The closing date for completed application forms is **Friday 23 March 1979.**

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The successful applicant will be responsible for the running of Edinburgh's new film centre being built in Lothian Road. When complete The Filmhouse will consist of two public cinemas and other facilities. Its activities include Edinburgh International Film Festival, Edinburgh Film Theatre, and it provides a base for the Edinburgh Film Guild. Experience in arts administration and a commitment to film are essential qualifications. Salary £5,937-£6,572 p.a. Details from **the Secretary, Scottish Film Council, 16-17 Woodside Terrace, Glasgow G3 7XN.**

WEA South Eastern District

Applications are invited for the post of

Tutor-Organiser for North Kent

(with special responsibility for Trade Union Studies)

Candidates should have a University degree or similar academic qualification in industrial relations, economics, politics or related subjects, and should have previous teaching and/or organising experience in the field of adult education. Salary Scale: Burnham F.E. Lecturer II in the range £3,747-£6,558 according to qualifications and experience. Application forms and further details are available from **The District Secretary, WEA, South Eastern District, 4 Castle Hill, Rochester, Kent** (on receipt of s.a.e.). The closing date for completed application forms is **28 February 1979.**

One Parent Families

Administration Assistant

A bright and lively person is required to act as secretarial assistant to the Deputy Director of this major national charity in Kentish Town.

The Deputy Director's work involves parliamentary pressure, Government liaison, press and media contacts and servicing committees. A keen interest in the work is as important as good typing, ability to take minutes, and general secretarial skills.

We offer a 35 hour week, 4 weeks holiday, and about £4,000 p.a. to the right person.

Application form and further information from: **Deputy Director, National Council for One Parent Families, 255 Kentish Town Road, London NW5 2LX. Telephone 01-267 1361.**

South Cheshire College

Could you Teach Psychology and Social Welfare?

We are looking for a well motivated graduate to teach psychology and social welfare to students embarking on a career within the nursing and social care fields. A teaching commitment is also required within the inservice courses offered to both the Nursing and Social Work Professions.

The salary range is £3,192-£5,334.

If you are interested and would like further details please write to **Mr George Moore, The College, Dane Bank Avenue, Crewe CW2 8AB.**

NATIONAL UNION OF BANK EMPLOYEES

NEGOTIATING OFFICIAL

required by the National Union of Bank Employees.

The successful candidate will be required to assist a senior Official in respect of negotiations and organisation involving the technical and services members of the union. Previous experience in this type of employment would be an advantage. This permanent and pensionable post is based in the City of London and has a commencing salary of £4,844 p.a. on a scale rising to £5,944 p.a. + £702 Inner London Allowance. Motor car provided.

Application forms are available from: **NUBE, Sheffield House, Portsmouth Road, Esher, Surrey.** Completed forms must reach NUBE not later than **22 February 1979.**

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41 Whitehall, London SW1.
01-930 0859.

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CONFERENCE ASSISTANT, some typing, age 19+, by Holborn tube. £2.75 LVs. £3,100.

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UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE

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Applications are invited for the appointment from the beginning of 1980 to the above-mentioned Chair, following the retirement of Professor C. J. Horne. The University is seeking an outstanding scholar with proven ability to provide academic leadership in the teaching and research activities of the Department.

SALARY: $A33,061 a year with provision for superannuation.

Further information, including details required in an application, is available from the Registrar of the University or from the Secretary General, Association of Commonwealth Universities (Appts), 36 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PF; further information about duties, facilities, research interests in the Department, etc. may be sought from the Chairman Mr A. M. Slade, in the University.

APPLICATIONS, in duplicate, giving the particulars listed in paragraph 10 of the statement should reach the Registrar of the University, GPO Box 498, Adelaide, South Australia 5001, not later than 31 March 1979.

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS

Applications are invited for the post of LECTURER in the above Department from persons qualified to teach and research in any branch of political studies. Candidates should have a good honours degree.

Salary on the scale for lecturers £3,883 - £7,754 (under review) according to age, qualifications and experience.

Applications forms and further particulars may be obtained from the Registrar, The University, Leeds LS2 9JT, *quoting reference* number 34/7/H. Closing date for applications 5 March 1979.

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
DEPARTMENT OF

ENGLISH LITERATURE

LECTURER
IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

Applications are invited for the post of Lecturer in English Literature. The successful candidate should take up duties in October 1979 or as soon as possible thereafter. Preference will be given to candidates whose main field of interest lies in drama.

Applications, by letter (8 copies), together with the names of two referees should be sent not later than 7 March 1979 to the Secretary to the University, Old College, South Bridge, Edinburgh EH8 9YL, from whom further particulars may be obtained. Please quote Reference 1010.

COMMUNITY LEADER

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The Simon Community is now looking for someone who can help us to sustain and develop the work of the Community in accordance with Simon principles.

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UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

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Applications are invited for a post of Professor of Sociology tenable from 1 October 1979. Salary in the Professorial range (minimum £9,443 per annum).

Further details from the Academic *Registrar, University of Warwick,* Coventry CV4 7AL to whom applications (three copies) should be sent by 7 March 1979. Please quote reference number 26/2A/79.

UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

LECTURER IN GOVERNMENT

Applications are invited for this post. A special interest in either Communist Politics or the politics of the USA would be an advantage, but applicants with any other specialism within political studies will also be considered. Initial salary range p.a.: £3,883-£4,631. Particulars and application forms (returnable by 23 February) from the Registrar, The University, Manchester M13 9PL. Quote ref: 24/79/NS.

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UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON, Gower St, WC1E 6BT. Lunch Hour Lecturers. 1.20 to 2. Admission free. 13 Feb. 'The Roman Law of Adultery' by Professor J. A. C. Thomas. 15 Feb. 'Hogarth'. Film directed by Edward Bennett. 'Coalface'. Film directed by Alberto Cavalcanti, 1935.

LABOUR AND EQUALITY. Fabian Seminar. 10 a.m. to 4.30, Saturday, 24 February. Chairman: Peter Townsend. Speakers: Paul Ormerod, Patricia Hewitt, Vincent Cable, *Malcolm Wicks, David Webster, Nicholas* Bosanquet, Robert Taylor. Venue: Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London SW1. £2 at door or in advance from 11 Dartmouth Street, SW1. 01-930 3077.

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UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON (Gower St, WC1E 6BT). A Public Lecture by Professor A. D. Trendall 'The Baltimore Painter and his Circle' on Wednesday 14 February at 5.30. Admission free, without ticket.

FOCUS GROUP, Royal Commonwealth Society, 18 Northumberland Ave, WC2. Tues. 13 Feb. 6.30. Geoffrey Lean 'The Observer', 'Future Conditional — Beyond Doom on environmental, resource and development issues'. Adm. 30p, non RCS members.

LIBERATION CONFERENCE ON IRAN. 10 Feb. Speakers include Fred Halliday (author of recent book 'Iran: Dictatorship and Development'). Doug. Grieve (Gen. Sec. Tobacco Workers' Union), Ron Todd (TGWU) and an Iranian woman. 10 a.m.-4.30 p.m. at NUFTO Hall, Jockey's Fields, Theobald's Road, WC1. Fee £1 pay at door. Details from Liberation, 313 Caledonian Rd, N1. (01-607 0465).

FRIDAY 9 FEB. 7.30. Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist). 'Pay Policy Smashed: What next?' Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, WC1.

TIME OF CHANGE. The Emergence of The World Teacher and The Reconstruction of The World. Talks by Benjamin Creme from a background of the Alice Bailey Teachings for The New Age. Friends' House, Euston Rd, NW1. Wednesdays 14, 21 & 28 Feb. 7 p.m. Questions, Meditation/Transmission. All welcome.

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